

RALPH WARDLAW, 1779-1853

With Particular Reference to  
His Theory of the Atonement,  
And the Rise of  
Congregationalism in Scotland

by

RALPH DOUGLAS HYSLOP

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy,  
The University of Edinburgh (New College)



## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Preface. . . . .	1
<u>Chapter</u>	
I THE RISE OF CONGREGATIONALISM IN SCOTLAND . . .	1
The First Hundred and Fifty Years (1583-1733) ..	1
The Eighteenth Century (1733-1795). . . . .	5
The Founders and Their Work (1795-1883) . . .	11   ? o
Rowland Hill. . . . .	11
Robert and James Haldane. . . . .	13
David Bogue. . . . .	17
The Preaching Tours. . . . .	21
First Churches. . . . .	24
The Circus, Edinburgh. . . . .	28
The Opposition of the Established Church. . .	34
II RALPH WARDLAW'S EARLY YEARS (1779-1803). . . .	39
III WARDLAW AND THE YOUNG CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES: A PERIOD OF GROWTH AND STRIFE (1803-1813). . .	48
The Lord's Supper. . . . .	49
Social Worship. . . . .	51
Baptism. . . . .	55
Disruption of the Tabernacles in Edinburgh and Glasgow. . . . .	57
Formation of the Congregational Union of Scotland. . . . .	60
The Contributions of Ralph Wardlaw to the Life and Work of the Churches. . . . .	62

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
IV THE SOCINIAN CONTROVERSY. . . . .	67
History. . . . .	67
The Grounds of Unitarian Dissent . . . . .	70
The Discourses on the Socinian Controversy . . . . .	73
The Area of Agreement. . . . .	76
The Battle of the Texts. . . . .	79
The Unity of the Godhead and the Plurality of Persons. . . . .	81
The Divinity of Jesus Christ. . . . .	88
The Holy Spirit. . . . .	93
The Irreconcilable Difference. . . . .	100
The "Discourses" in America. . . . .	102
Jedidiah Morse and the Battle Against Unitarianism. . . . .	104
Leonard Woods and the Founding of Andover Seminary. . . . .	107
V CHURCH AND STATE: THE VOLUNTARY CONTROVERSY AND THE DEBATE ON CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT. . . . .	112
The Voluntary Controversy. . . . .	113
Thomas Chalmers' Lectures "On the Establishment and Extension of National Churches". . . . .	118
Religious Establishments Defined. . . . .	121
The Weakness of Voluntarism. . . . .	123
The Character and Necessity of a Territorial Establishment of Religion . . . . .	125
"National Church Establishments Examined" by Ralph Wardlaw . . . . .	130

Chapter V cont<sup>d</sup>

Page

The Voluntary Principle Truly Defined and Illustrated. . . . .	131
The Parish System Examined . . . . .	137
The Evils of Establishment. . . . .	139
The Authority of Scripture. . . . .	144
The Duty and Right of the Civil Magistrate	150
A Free But National Church: The Great Issue.	152
VI THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT: PART ONE . . . .	158
Wardlaw's Theory of the Atonement. . . . .	158
Sources. . . . .	158
The Theory in Brief Review. . . . .	158
The Justice of God. . . . .	162
Atonement and Election . . . . .	167
The Universal Sufficiency and Limited Efficacy of the Atonement. . . . .	168
The Work of Christ. . . . .	180
Pardon, Repentance and Faith. . . . .	184
Pardon. . . . .	184
Repentance. . . . .	185
Faith. . . . .	187
Summary. . . . .	189
Criticism. . . . .	189
VII DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT: PART TWO. . . . .	202
The Atonement Seen in its Own Light: Thomas Erskine and McLeod Campbell. . . . .	202



Chapter VII *Cont?*

	<u>Page</u>
Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. . . . .	205
McLeod Campbell. . . . .	213
Conclusion. . . . .	219
The Historical Derivation of Ralph Wardlaw's Theory of the Atonement. . . . .	220
The Atonement Controversy in the United Associate Synod. . . . .	230
James Morison of Kilmarnock. . . . .	232
Edward Polhill on "The Divine Will". . . . .	238
Conclusion. . . . .	247
Toward an Adequate Theory of the Atonement in Reformed Theology: The Corrective of Luther upon Calvinist Doctrine. . . . .	253
The Atonement in the Thought of Luther . . . . .	263
Conclusion. . . . .	271
VIII RALPH WARDLAW: CALVINIST IN TRANSITION. . . . .	279
The Problem of the Minor Figure. . . . .	279
Preacher. . . . .	282
Christian Educator. . . . .	285
Churchman . . . . .	288
Controversialist. . . . .	290
Calvinist in Transition. . . . .	295
Modification or Reconstruction? . . . . .	300
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY. . . . .	304
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	311
APPENDIX: Translation of Amyraut's Exposition of Romans viii: 28-30. . . . .	327
FOOTNOTES. . . . .	338

## PREFACE

The Congregational Churches of the United States are now engaged in discussion of a proposed union with the Evangelical and Reformed denomination. The opposition to this union, voiced in many quarters, reveals both how strongly the churches affirm their historic position of congregational independence and how completely they have abandoned the Calvinist theology which was once their own. This study of Ralph Wardlaw, an early Scottish Congregationalist, is an attempt to examine in some detail the thought of one who had begun to move away from Calvinism even while defending its doctrines.

The recovery of a vital theological tradition in a free church must come in part through the understanding of the forces which led to the loss of that tradition. The life and thought of this nineteenth century Congregationalist suggest some of the reasons for the loss of theological vitality in the Congregational Churches of the present. ? u!a  
Among these are: failure to maintain and re-state a valid Protestant doctrine of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit; acceptance of a Grotian theory of atonement rather than the reconstruction of Reformation doctrine; uncritical belief in the power of the voluntary church to serve the religious needs of the whole community.

The positive theological work to be done in the Congregational Churches must, we believe, follow the lines of development suggested in the foregoing statement. We must state anew our belief concerning the word of God as contained in the Bible, and interpreted and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. We must develop a theory of the atonement which combines the truth and power of Lutheran and Calvinist thought. We must examine our concept of the church and ask whether our churches as presently conceived and organized are adequate for the task of Christianizing the community. These are tasks great enough to engage the efforts of many in the United States and Britain. The insights gained in this study have strengthened my own determination to be numbered among those who will seek the reformation of Congregationalism in our time.

For the opportunity to undertake this research I wish to thank the Faculty and Directors of the Chicago Theological Seminary which granted a two year fellowship, 1938-1940; the National Council on Religion in Higher Education for election as a Fellow in 1946, and the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches of the U. S. A. which granted leave of absence to complete my work in the same year.

The libraries of New College and the Congregational Divinity College in Edinburgh; New College, London; the New York Public Library and Union Theological Seminary Library,

New York were used in the preparation of this dissertation.

I wish to acknowledge especially the helpfulness of Miss Lucy W. Markley, Librarian of Union Theological Seminary.

## CHAPTER I

### THE RISE OF CONGREGATIONALISM IN SCOTLAND

#### The First Hundred and Fifty Years 1583-1733

from  
Holland In November or December of the year 1583, Robert Browne took ship <sup>for</sup> Scotland. With him were four or five Englishmen and their wives and families. They landed at Dundee, and, finding some support there, proceeded to Saint Andrews. There, Andrew Melville gave Browne a letter to Mr. James Lawsons in Edinburgh and the company arrived in that city on Thursday, January 9, 1584<sup>3</sup>. Browne took up residence in the Canongate and began at once as King James afterwards said, "to sow his popple there." The king had no high opinion of Browne and the latter did not think well of Scotland, for he said in a sermon preached in 1588, "I have seen all manner of wickednesse to abounde much more in their best places in Scotland than in our worser places heere in England."<sup>1</sup>

Browne, though he gave his name to that movement which is the first evidence of distinctive Congregational principles of churchmanship in England, later recanted and died a member of the Anglican church. It is recorded of John Penry, the Welsh martyr whose name is associated with the Mar-Prelate Tracts, (though not as the author, it is now believed) that he also spent some time in Scotland between 1589 and 1592. There were other contacts between the first

Congregationalists and Scottish churchmen, especially after the Scrooby group removed to Leyden. But it is doubtful whether these contacts had any influence upon the churches of Scotland whose struggle was not yet against Episcopacy but against Papacy.

The Scottish Commissioners at the Westminster Assembly certainly became acquainted with the principles of Congregationalism when they confronted in debate those able representatives of Independency, "The Five Dissenting Brethren." Baillie in his Letters and Journals says of them and others:

"The Independent men, whereof there are some ten or eleven in the Synod, manie of them very able men, as Thomas Goodwin, Nye, Burroughs, Bridge, Carter, Caryl, Philips, Sterry, were for the divine institution of a Doctor in everie congregation as well as a Pastor."<sup>2</sup>

"Mr. Hendersone travelled betwixt them (and their opponents) and drew on a committee for accommodation. . ."<sup>3</sup>

But on the question of "reuling Elders," Mr. Baillie records that there was an exceedingly long debate and, though the Scottish view of the question was obviously held by the majority, there was another attempt at compromise. Baillie concludes:

"This is a poynt of high consequence; and upon no other we expect so great difficultie, except alone on Independencie; wherewith we purpose not to medle in haste, till it please God to advance our armie, which we expect will much assist our arguments."<sup>4</sup>

The Assembly did decide, by an overwhelming majority, for the Presbyterian polity championed by Baillie and his

companions, but this was done before the Scots army had exercised much influence upon the decision. The greater influence was exercised by the growth of radical sects which threatened the very life of the churches for whose ordering the Assembly had been instituted. This tendency to anarchy, which an unrestrained Independency often exhibits, was noted at the time by Baillie who comments,

" . . . a number of the citie and countrie ministers gave in an earnest and well penned supplication to the Assemblie, regraiting the lamentable confusion of their church under the present anarchie; the increase of Anabaptists, Antinomians, and other sectaries; the boldnesse of some in the citie and about it, in gathering separate congregations. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

We are to encounter quite similar protests over two centuries later as the first Congregational churches are established in Scotland.

The people of Scotland became acquainted with Independency when the Republican army under Cromwell invaded the country during the Commonwealth. John Owen and Joseph Carlyle were among the Chaplains; officers and men of the army often preached, read the Scriptures and talked with the people. No Independent churches were formed, however, in either the 16th or 17th centuries. Such a church was formed by John Glas at Teeling near Dundee in 1725. He was the first Scotsman, of whom there is any record, who advocated the voluntary idea of the church. His answers to the questions asked him by the Synod of Angus and Mearns in April, 1728, are quite conclusive. For instance:



✓ "Quer. 19. Is it your opinion, that a single congregation of believers with their pastor, are not under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and authority of superior church-judicatures, nor censurable by them, either as to doctrine, worship, or practise? Or not?

? = Knox's? "Ans. A congregation or church of Jesus Christ, with its presbytery, is, in its discipline, subject to no jurisdiction under heaven." 6

Glas' expulsion from the Established Church was not the signal for any movement out of the church by others of the clergy, though in 1768 Messrs. Ferrier and Smith resigned their livings and founded an Independent church at Balchristie in Fife.

These scanty traces of Congregationalism in the early 18th century in Scotland are not connected historically with the rather sudden rise of the denomination at the close of the century. It is with this latter phenomenon that we are concerned in a study of the life and thought of Ralph Wardlaw. His life began in the closing years of that century, as did the life of the church which he served. He was, on his mother's side of the family, a direct descendent of the founders of the Secession Church. He was a member of that church. But he was also heir to the evangelistic movements of the 18th century and he became a minister of a church which itself was born of these movements. If we are to understand his influence and his contribution to the thinking of not only the Congregationalists of Scotland and England but also of the Secession Churches and the Established Church, we must review some of the events of that century.



## The Eighteenth Century (1733-1795)

"If the day broke upon the Scots Kirk in clouds and darkness, it closed in light and peace, for the Kirk never stood lower in knowledge and charity than at the beginning and never stood higher in those fine qualities of religion than at the close of the eighteenth century."<sup>7</sup>

In these glowing words, John Watson closes the first chapter of his book on "The Scot of the Eighteenth Century." But another writer of an earlier day described the situation prevailing at that time in the Kirk, in these (18 ex?) words:

"Religion, where any attention was paid to it, became cold and speculative; but in many quarters, it was altogether disregarded, for the people had sunk into a listless indifference, and a torpid apathy. . . The polished classes were charmed with the meagre theology and the superficial morality of Blair. . . In the meantime, the other orders of society were sinking deeper and deeper into a state of utter ignorance, infidelity, and immorality. Corrupt doctrines; the prostitution of the most solemn ordinances of Christ to all who chose; and the utter neglect of church discipline fully prevailed. An empty form of religion was observed, while the power of it was ridiculed."<sup>8</sup>

The century whose closing years inspired such radically opposed estimates of the Christian character of the church had seen distressing conflict within the Kirk. In the years following 1733, a Secession had taken place under the leadership of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine. While the actual event responsible for the Secession was the preaching of a sermon by Ebenezer Erskine as Moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling (at Perth on October 10, 1732)

and his censure therefor by the Synod, some deeper sources of conflict may be seen in the nature of the settlement of the Revolution in 1689-90. Erskine in his sermon declared that the Revolution Church lacked the fervour and spiritual life of the Church of the Covenant. The Confession of Faith then ratified was not Knox's but that of the Westminster Assembly. Patronage was abolished by an Act of the Parliament of 1690, but there had been a Restoration of the Law of Patronage in 1712. Yet, even more important than the question of patronage and the many questions of freedom of the Kirk which it raised, was the birth and growth of the "moderate" spirit among the clergy. One can imagine that the Erskines did not approve of the admonition of King William, delivered to the Assembly of 1690 by Lord Carmichael, his Commissioner:

"A calm and peaceable procedure will be no less pleasing to us than it becometh you. We never could be of the mind that violence was suited to the advancing of true religion; nor do we intend that our authority shall ever be a tool to the irregular passions of any party. Moderation is what religion enjoins, neighbouring Churches expect from you, and we recommend to you."<sup>9</sup>

These men of the Secession were not persuaded that "moderation is what religion enjoins," if that were to mean the abandonment of evangelical zeal in the preaching of the Gospel.

The Erskines were among the twelve "Marrow Men" who protested against the condemnation of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity"<sup>10</sup> by the Assembly of 1720. The errors in the book (and the committee appointed by the Assembly reported five distinct heresies) were those which tended to Antinomianism.

The book contained such sentences as these:

"A believer doth not commit sin;"  
 "The Lord is not angry with a believer for his sins;"  
 "Nor yet as touching your justification and eternal salvation will God love you ever a whit the less, though you commit never so many or great sins."<sup>11</sup>

It would seem that the condemnation of the book and the rebuke administered in 1722 to the "Twelve Apostles" was partly justified. It was, however, a condemnation and a rebuke administered by a Kirk whose acknowledged leader was Principal Haddow, representative of the Moderates. When Ebenezer Erskine preached his sermon denouncing the defections of the Kirk, he had in mind not polity alone but doctrine. And when the final Secession took place, it was, in the words of the four seceders (Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff, James Fisher) a withdrawal from

"the prevailing party in this established Church, who have now cast us out from ministerial communion with them, are carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles; . . . Therefore we do, for these and many other weighty reasons to be laid open in due time, protest that we are obliged to make a Secession from them, and that we can have no ministerial communion with them, till they see their sins and mistakes, and amend them."<sup>12</sup>

There followed the split of the Secession Synod, on April 9, 1747, into Burgher and Anti-Burgher with the deposing of the former group, including the Erskines, by the latter, which included Moncrieff and Adam Gib. This breach was not mended until 1820. Ralph Wardlaw was reared in a Burgher home and received his theological education at the Burgher College at Selkirk, headed by Dr. George Lawson.

Wardlaw's mother was the daughter of James Fisher, one of the four founders of the Secession Church. Fisher's wife was Jean, the eldest daughter of Ebenezer Erskine. Thus Wardlaw was related to those who, in the earlier years of the century, withdrew from a church they believed to be recreant to its divine commission. Wardlaw's biographer puts it more strongly when he speaks of "that small but noble band, which, in 1733, after being extruded from a tyrannical and corrupt church, whose evils they had in vain striven to correct, formed themselves into the Associate Presbytery. . ."<sup>13</sup>

It is not necessary to praise or condemn the action of the Seceders in order to observe that their struggle represented a phase in the development of the spirit of independence in the church in Scotland. Though the established Church did all within its power to keep the Seceders within the Church and even to receive them back when they had departed, these efforts were in vain. They failed because men like Ebenezer Erskine were convinced that the Church for which they spoke was the true and historic Church of Scotland, its faith the faith received from the Apostles and its order that free government of the Church which loyalty to Christ must demand. It should be emphasized however, that the Seceders of 1733 manifested a "spirit of independency" and not its ultimate form. They were different men <sup>from</sup> than Glas who pushed his spiritual theory of the church to the furthest extreme. They were not advocates of the voluntary idea of the Church. They were, it appears to me, the forerunners in the Scottish Kirk

of Chalmers and the other leaders of the Disruption. But in those later struggles of the nineteenth century, as we shall see, Ralph Wardlaw was on the side of the "voluntaries." His relationship to Erskine and Fisher was one of blood; spiritually, his indebtedness was to others of whom we must later speak.

The "Moderates" who asserted their power in the Kirk in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, ruled for fifty years. They began to lose their grip upon the Assembly, as they had long ago lost any hold upon the common people, in the last years of the century. It was inevitable that a party in the Church of Scotland which chose the "via Media," deplored religious enthusiasm, was devoted to literature and good living, and included in its number ministers who enjoyed a worldly life should be denounced in no uncertain terms by those who looked for and welcomed a revival of evangelical Christianity in Scotland.

However, when George Whitefield came to Scotland and so greatly stirred the people by his preaching, even Seceders condemned his appeal to emotion and considered the great revival at Cambuslang an outbreak of hysteria. They were ready, tentatively, to welcome Whitefield as a fellow Evangelical, but denounced him when he would not agree with them in refraining from any intercourse with the Established Church. They alone were the Lord's people, they claimed. Whitefield could not accept so arbitrary a limitation upon



his right to preach salvation to all and left Scotland with a rather low opinion of both the Established Church and the Seceders.<sup>14</sup> But this was in the first half of the century. The spirit of religious enthusiasm which swept over England at that time was yet to bear fruit in Scotland, though fifty years were to elapse and both the scenes of conflict and the participants to be greatly changed. The rise of Congregationalism in Scotland at the close of the century was one of the fruits of an evangelistic movement clearly connected with the work of Wesley and Whitefield. The men who figure most prominently in this movement are Rowland Hill, Robert and James Haldane, David Bogue and Greville Ewing.

## The Founders and Their Work (1795-1883)

o?

## Rowland Hill

Rowland Hill was born August 23, 1744 at the time that Whitefield was preaching in Scotland and drawing the fire of both Kirk and Seceders. He entered St. John's College, Cambridge, at the close of 1764 and two years later became personally acquainted with Whitefield who exercised a great influence upon him. Admitted to Deacon's orders by the Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1773, he was settled as Curate of Kingston, near Taunton. The farmers in his parish complained "that the preacher ranted so loudly, that he could be heard through the village." This moved him to declare from the pulpit, "What! shall we not lift up our voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud, and spare not, when, with all our ranting, sinners can sleep, and be damned under our very sermons?" The old farmer, at whom this blast was aimed, opened his eyes and heard the last of the sentence which undoubtedly sounded like one of final judgment. At any rate, he left the church and was said never to have entered it again.<sup>15</sup>

It was not for these injudicious remarks that Hill was denied ordination but because of his persistence in itinerate evangelism. Though his loyalty to the Church of England was pronounced, the influence of Whitefield and the evangelical movement was too great to resist and he finally

ist's  
sent  
him  
sent  
supra)

became pastor of the independent Surrey Chapel, which was opened in 1783. The assumption of this preaching post did not end the itinerant preaching to which he had become so accustomed in the preceding ten years. He was said to have preached 23,000 sermons at the time of his death and it was as a traveling evangelist that he influenced Scotland. On July 15, 1798 he began a preaching tour of Scotland to which he had been invited by the Haldanes.

Anyone who delves into the history of the rise of Congregationalism in Scotland must be impressed by the influence of those who came up from England as Rowland Hill did, "to travel through the country and preach to the people wherever he could find access to them."<sup>16</sup> But it was the Haldanes who brought Hill to Scotland. It was Robert Haldane who supplied the money which rented the building in which he preached. Robert Haldane and his younger brother, James, were the Fathers of Congregationalism in Scotland, yet they began their work not as Congregationalists but simply as those who believed in evangelism. It is quite clear also from the record of Robert Haldane's life that he undertook the work in Scotland as a second choice when thwarted in his original plan for the spending of his energies and talents in the cause of Christ in foreign missions.



## Robert and James Haldane

Robert Haldane was born February 28, 1764 in London. His younger brother, James Alexander Haldane was born at Dundee on July 14, 1768. They were descended from an ancient Perthshire family. At the age of sixteen, Robert went to sea, joining the crew of the "Monarch" at Portsmouth. In 1785, in his seventeenth year, James also went to sea, joining the East India service. In the meantime, Robert had been transferred to the Moudroyant, the "finest ship in the British Navy" in 1781, and had taken part in the action with the Pegase, and in the relief of Gibraltar. Lord Duncan, the Haldane's' uncle, was stationed at Gosport and the two brothers spent a good deal of time there in these years. It was there that they became acquainted with David Bogue, the pastor of an Independent congregation in Gosport.

(1750-1825) Bogue was born in Berwickshire, educated at the grammar school of Dunse (the birth-place of Duns Scotus) and at the University of Edinburgh. Licensed as a preacher in the Church of Scotland, he went to London and became an Independent, settling at Gosport in 1777. In 1784, Bogue accompanied Robert Haldane and another young man named Heinekin to the Continent. They are spoken of as his "two pupils" and it is evident that both the Haldanes had been directed in their course of reading by Bogue. Robert had by this time, however, entered the University of Edinburgh and attended classes there in 1784-85. In the Spring of 1785 he embarked on "The Grand Tour"

(page)

and was married in April of the following year. In September, 1786, the Haldanes settled down at his home, "Airthrey," near Stirling. There he lived the life of a country gentleman for ten years, spending much of his time in improving and landscaping his estate.

James Haldane, having entered the service of the East India Company in his seventeenth year, had four voyages in the "Duke of Montrose," the last ending June 19, 1793. In less than a month after that, he had passed his twenty-fifth birthday and completed the necessary examinations to qualify as Captain of an India-man. He was nominated to the "Melville Castle"; preparations for the voyage were completed before the end of December and Haldane and his wife, recently married, prepared to part. But the fleet, of which the Melville Castle was a part, did not weigh anchor until May. In the meantime, a mutiny took place and was put down by the cool and courageous action of Captain Haldane. While the fleet was at Portsmouth waiting to sail, Haldane lived on board his ship and had a great deal of spare time. He began to read his Bible every day -- more, as he says, "from a conviction of its propriety than any real concern about eternity."<sup>17</sup> He talked with Dr. Bogue about the Lord's Supper, in whose celebration he had never joined, "being formerly restrained partly by conscience, while living in open sin, and partly from want of convenient opportunities."<sup>18</sup>

The thought of quitting the sea had now entered his mind. He prayed about it and sought the advice of his brother,

Robert. Disposing of his command for 9,000 pounds and his share in the property of the ship and stores for 6,000 pounds more, he returned with his wife to Scotland early in the summer of 1794, living first at Stirling Castle and then at Airthrey. He continued to be occupied with religious enquiry "more from a conviction of its importance than any deep conviction of sin."<sup>19</sup>

Robert Haldane in the meantime was aroused from his comfortable and lethargic existence by the French Revolution. "He saw, or imagined he saw through the gloom, the prospect of a new and better order of things when oppression and immorality would cease, and Governments be regulated by a paramount regard for the welfare of the people."<sup>20</sup>

It later became necessary for him to defend himself against violent charges on this account and his own words in his "Address to the Public" of 1800 are revealing:

"Before the French Revolution, having nothing to rouse my mind, I lived in the country, almost wholly engrossed by country pursuits, little concerned about the general interests or happiness of mankind, but selfishly and unthankfully enjoying the blessings which God in His providence has so bountifully poured around me. As to religion, I contented myself with that general profession which is so common and so worthless, and that form of godliness which completely denies its power. I endeavored to be decent, and what is called moral, but was ignorant of my lost state by nature, and of the deep depravity and corruption of my heart, as well as of the strictness, purity and extent of the divine law. While I spoke of a Saviour, I was little acquainted with his character, the value of his sufferings and death, the need I stood in of the atoning efficacy of his pardoning blood, or of the imputation of his perfect obedience, and meritorious

righteousness; and of the sanctifying influences of the eternal Spirit, to apply his salvation to my soul. When politics began to be talked of, I was led to consider everything anew. I eagerly caught at them as a pleasing speculation. As a fleeting phantom, they eluded my grasp; but missing the shadow, I caught the substance; and while obliged to abandon these confessedly empty and unsatisfactory pursuits, I obtained, in some measure, the solid consolations of the gospel; so that I may say, as Paul concerning the Gentiles of old, 'He was found of me who sought him not.'<sup>21</sup>

So the two brothers, wealthy, adventurous and strangely dissatisfied with their lives, came at almost the same time to the same conclusion. There must be complete dedication of their powers to one whom now they began to call and know as Saviour in a new way. Each had seen violence, each was moved in some way by outward events -- the mutiny, the French Revolution -- but through it all there appears unquestionably the working of the Holy Spirit through the reading of the Bible and the influence of a Scottish-born Independent pastor, David Bogue, who had opened the Bible and the Christian life to them.

## David Bogue

This minister of Gosport hailed the French Revolution with enthusiasm too. He spoke of the aspect of the times in words of hope: "The moral world is big with great events and is hastening on their accomplishment."<sup>22</sup> The sermon from which these words were taken reveals quite clearly that David Bogue was identifying events in France with certain intimations of new life in the churches of his own country and regarding the two as part of one great movement in God's Providence. It is perhaps difficult, at this date, to understand the identification of revolution in France with the beginnings of the foreign missionary movement in England, for that was the other movement to which Bogue's hope was turning. It is possible, however, to understand that there was a new spirit of freedom abroad in the world which might express itself in diverse ways: in the preaching of the evangelists as well as in the writings of Tom Paine; in the sending of missionaries to Tahiti as well as in the setting up of the Goddess of Reason; in the founding of the London Missionary Society as well as in the creation of the French and American Republics.

Bogue was one of the first editors of the *Evangelical Magazine* which began its career in July, 1793. In August of 1794 he directed an appeal for foreign missions to the readers of the magazine. In response to his appeal, a group began to



meet and in the course of events, the London Missionary Society was constituted in meetings held September 22-24, 1795. There were twenty-five Directors, including both David Bogue and Rowland Hill. It was decided that the first mission of the society should be to "Otaheite or some other of the islands of the South Pacific," and also that, as early as possible, missions should be attempted "to the coast of Africa, or to Tartary, <sup>via</sup> by Astrachan, or to Surat on the Malabar Coast, or to Bengal, or the Coromandel coast, or to the Isle of Samatra, or to the Pelew Islands."<sup>23</sup>

It is easy to see how the Directors became excited and infected others with their enthusiasm for the great adventure of Christian missions to these far-off and exotic lands. The ship, "Duff," with James Wilson serving as Master without pay, left August 10, 1796 and reached Otaheite in March, 1797.

Both the Haldanes enrolled as members of the Society and subscribed 50 pounds each. For, about the time of the founding of the London Mission Society, Robert Haldane had heard about and seen accounts of the work of the Baptist Missionary Society in Bengal under William Carey. It was Dr. Innes, Chaplain to the Castle and second minister in Stirling, who introduced Haldane to this work and he records the effect it produced on the country gentleman to read of the cobbler who had left home and country to serve Christ. "Christianity," he (Haldane) said, "is everything or nothing. If it be true, it warrants and commands every sacrifice to

promote its influence. If it be not, then let us lay aside the hypocrisy of professing to believe it."<sup>24</sup>

Haldane himself says, "A strong desire occupied my mind to engage in the honorable service."<sup>25</sup> He thought it over for six months, talking with his wife about it, and obtained her consent. Then he proposed to Innes that they should "go to Bengal and spend the remainder of their lives in endeavoring to communicate the precious truths of the Gospel to the Hindoos who were living under the British Government." He proposed that Bogue and Greville Ewing (Innes' brother-in-law) accompany them. Having reached so momentous a decision, he immediately took action by going to London, attending the meeting of the London Missionary Society in May 1796, and staying with Bogue in Gosport. Late on the night of May 22, 1796, after satisfying himself as to Bogue's qualifications, he told him of his plans and gained his consent to accompany him. Haldane proposed that he settle upon each of his three collaborators the sum of 3500 pounds to compensate them for the loss of a future in the ministry at home. Other arrangements for the financing of the mission were to be equally generous, as Haldane proposed to invest his entire fortune in the enterprise.

All these plans were destined to be frustrated by the refusal of the East India Company to allow the party to proceed to Benares where they had hoped to establish their mission. Haldane's political views were suspect, and it was

said also that one of the Directors of the company declared he would rather see a band of devils in India than a band of missionaries. By such a combination of caution and perversity, even the most vigorous representations by Haldane were defeated; though he continued for over two years to urge his case and sold his estate that he might be ready to leave immediately, if permission were granted.



## The Preaching Tours

Thwarted in his plan to establish a mission at Bengal, Robert Haldane turned to the work at home which had been launched by his brother, James, Mr. Aikman and Joseph Rate, a student from Bogue's Academy in Gosport, in their first preaching tour to the north of Scotland, begun July 12, 1797. James Haldane's "Journal" of this tour is a fascinating account of, and justification for, lay preaching and itinerant evangelism. He had been influenced to become a lay preacher by John Campbell, one of those whom Robert Haldane wanted for his mission to India. Campbell, an ironmonger by trade, had a shop overlooking the Grassmarket of Edinburgh. But he was far more than an ironmonger. "He was in Edinburgh the living model of a City Missionary, a district visitor, a Scripture reader, a tract distributor, a Sabbath-school teacher, and a Sabbath-school founder. . ."<sup>26</sup> It was as a founder of Sabbath-schools that Campbell affected the future of James Haldane, for the latter thought he might help in establishing these schools in the north. He did not expect to preach though he entertained "some distant hope that the Lord would direct."<sup>27</sup>

The Lord did direct and Haldane preached, discovering more and more the necessity of proclaiming what he knew to be the full Gospel to those who had heard it only in part. This involved confronting those who preached in the Established Church and repudiating their doctrine in the very communities

where they were the settled pastors. One such incident is worth notice as perhaps characteristic. It indicates the reason for the strong feeling against the itinerants on the part of many ministers. The entry is for July, 16 --

Kerrymuir:

"Went to church and heard sermon. The minister preached from I John 3:8. The sermon did not appear to us gladd tidings to sinners. The object of it was to shew, that the Son of God came into the world to instruct and enable men to destroy the works of the devil. He represented the gospel as a contract between God and man, of which the equitable condition, he said, was repentance and sincere although imperfect obedience, which God, he added, was too good and too just not to accept. As he read the sermon and repeated every passage of the smallest importance, it was impossible for us to mistake the meaning of any of them."<sup>28</sup>

In the evening when the Established Church was dismissed, Haldane preached in the market place.

"Preached to them from Mark XVI: 15 and 16: Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned. Explained to them the gospel and the circumstances which rendered it glad tidings to every creature; shewed that it was a dispensation wholly of grace, and that it was completely contradictory, both to scripture and to fact, to represent man as capable of doing anything in order to render himself acceptable to God. The pride of man indeed rejected this doctrine. He wished to recommend himself to God by his repentance, which he considered, and was taught to consider, as we had heard from their minister, as the equitable condition upon which God would be reconciled to him."<sup>29</sup>

The General Assembly, in the preceding year, had under the influence of the Moderates opposed the Resolution: "That it is the duty of Christians to carry the Gospel to the

heathen world" and had argued, in part, that there was missionary work to be done first at home. Robert Haldane, who had been prevented from going abroad, was now able to further the efforts of those who, with his brother, were proving the truth of the Assembly's contention. After the journey to the north in 1797, it became apparent that some systematic plan must be devised for carrying on this work. Dr. Bogue had established an Association in Hampshire for this type of work and with this as their model, the Haldanes and their associates in December, 1797 and January 1798 established "The Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home." The Committee, composed of twelve laymen, announced their purpose in clear and forthright language: "It is not our design to form or to extend the influence of any sect. Our sole intention is to make known the Evangelical Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In employing itinerants, schoolmasters or others, we do not consider ourselves as conferring ordination upon them, or appointing them to the pastoral office. We only propose, by sending them out, to supply the means of grace wherever we perceive a deficiency."<sup>30</sup>

## First Churches

While these developments were taking place as a result of the first preaching tours, something was happening to the north in Aberdeen. Haldane, Aikman and Rate had visited the city July 21-24, 1797, but there is no mention in the Journal of any group such as is described in a most interesting letter written by George Moir and Al. Innes to John Morison in April, 1798. The Journal states,

". . .within these five years, several faithful gospel ministers have come to this city. The churches in consequence are much better attended, and we heard, with a mixture of joy and regret that many people, especially in the neighborhood, were disposed to attend the faithful publication of the gospel, but could get no accommodation in the places of worship where it is preached."<sup>31</sup>

Haldane and Aikman visited Aberdeen again on their return journey October 28-29, one preaching in the Relief Kirk and the other in the Gaelic Chapel.<sup>32</sup>

But the letter to Morison describes the coming together of "a little society forming ourselves upon the Congregational plan" in October, 1797.<sup>33</sup> Of this society, the writers say,

"We belonged to different communions, in all which we found a rigid strictness in demanding submission to human standards of orthodoxy; but a lamentable neglect in seeking sound experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ and a life becoming His holy gospel. In short, we saw much zeal about many things indifferent and much coldness about the 'one thing needful'. By conversing together occasionally, although belonging to different communions, we found that we agree, in all the

leading doctrines of the gospel, and that the Lord had fashioned our hearts alike, and were led to conclude that the love of God shed abroad in the heart is a far more scriptural and steady principle of union than a constrained belief in human creeds and confessions when genuine love is wanting."<sup>34</sup>

They continue,

"...in the month of October, 1797, we formed ourselves into a society. . . and wrote letters to several Independent ministers and tutors requesting their advice and influence. . . they all advised us to preserve our fellowship, and promised to befriend the design; but none seemed more anxious for our success than the Rev. David Bogue, an Independent minister and tutor at Gosport. Being himself a Scotsman, he seemed to retain a regard for our countrymen."  
(Italics are those of the original letter).<sup>35</sup>

They were compelled to build their own church if they were to have a place for worship, and, being men of moderate means, they planned to make it small. On the very day they proposed to secure a plot of ground, Mr. Bogue advised them to build a church that would accommodate a thousand or twelve hundred persons. They prudently scaled the estimate down to seven hundred and chose their plot of ground. On the day that they were laying the first stone, Mr. Haldane wrote requesting that they "make it larger." With two such persuasive and timely letters in their hands, they finally decided to build to seat a thousand. Their comment on the changes in planning is a bit plaintive:

"Thus have we been led on, step by step, and we think providentially; but we feel the weight of our undertaking, and sometimes we are ready to apprehend consequences, for the sum necessary to complete our design will be about eight hundred pounds, and we have but little prospect of any considerable assistance."<sup>36</sup>



They state their "views of the leading truths of the gospel" in the form assumed in a previous statement they had sent to Bogue. As this statement comprises the earliest made by a group recognizing itself as Congregational, it is of great interest:

"Man is a fallen corrupt being -- cannot help himself; never seeks God till sought by Him; yet, as the Lord invites, and sinners refuse, it is entirely their own blame if they perish. We believe that men are justified by faith only, without the deeds of the law. This faith is the free gift of God, and uniformly produces good works, which works are not a title to, but a qualification for, the heavenly inheritance. In short, we believe that salvation in its commencement, progress, and completion, is the free, unmerited gift of God, meritoriously secured by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and applied by the Holy Spirit."<sup>37</sup>

The letter also contains a description of the way in which this church without a pastor admits new members. Not only is the candidate thoroughly scrutinized and his moral character investigated by the members, his "views of the grand doctrines of the gospel and his reasons for wishing to associate with us" carefully investigated, but he must be examined before the church on three points:

- "1. A short account of the way in which he was led to true concern about the state of his soul;
2. A brief statement respecting the leading doctrines of the gospel;
3. A satisfactory account of the reasons which have induced him to leave his former religious connections, and to unite himself with us."<sup>38</sup>

The writers later affirm that they are not "party men" and that they wish "nothing to be made a term of church fellowship

which has not been constituted such by Christ Himself."<sup>39</sup>

Here is, at the very beginning, that combined concern for purity of communion and the avoidance of sectarian exclusiveness which, though seeming incompatible, was the grand objective toward which the thought and practise of Congregationalism moved.

The George Street Chapel in Aberdeen, whose walls were completed when this letter was written in April, 1798, was completed and opened on Sunday, September 2 of that year with the Rev. James Bennett of Romsey preaching. On the following Sunday, he formed a church of nine members explaining at length the principles of Congregational Church Polity.<sup>40</sup> It appears that this was the first Congregational Church organized in Scotland, though Alexander Haldane, in his Memoir of Robert and James Haldane, claims that honor for the Circus Church in Edinburgh. It is probable that the fame of the Circus Church and its first minister led to this error, or there may have been some family pride involved. No one will deny that it was that later church in Edinburgh and not the Chapel in Aberdeen, which attracted the attention of Scotland (both favorable and unfavorable), and brought the new denomination into prominence at its very birth. To the history of this church's founding we must now turn.

### The Circus, Edinburgh

In May, 1798, Charles Simeon<sup>41</sup> of Cambridge, ordained in the Church of England, visited Edinburgh and preached in Established Churches. Preaching in the Tolbooth Church, Simeon was tactless enough to pray that the Assembly "might do no evil." He was doubtless thinking of a possible judgment by that body concerning lay preaching and itinerant evangelists, but his words were not calculated to soothe the feelings of the ministers and may have precipitated the action of the following year. It was apparently this Simeon who had suggested to the Haldanes that a building called the Circus in Edinburgh might be used as a place for meetings such as the ones held in the Tabernacles in England. Sometime in March or April the Circus was leased. In his "Address to the Public," Robert Haldane says, "Those of us who met to consult about this business, were uncertain how such a plan might answer in Edinburgh. We therefore invited from England only three ministers at first. The Circus, as being a large and commodious place, was engaged for a few months, and Mr. Rowland Hill, so well and so long known as a successful and able preacher of the gospel, opened the place."<sup>42</sup>

Rowland Hill, called by Robert Haldane to preach at the Circus on July 29, met quite by chance at Langholm on July 26 James Haldane and Robert Aikmen who were engaged in their second tour. The services at the Circus were held at seven in the morning and six in the evening that they might



not interfere with the stated services at the churches. Hill preached not only in the Circus but in Leith and on Calton Hill to great congregations said to number 15,000-20,000 persons. He remained in Scotland until September 3. He himself was not a Congregationalist, being rather critical of some of their conceptions of polity and many of their practises. It was not the intention of the Haldanes to "form or extend the influence of any sect." Succeeding Mr. Hill, however, were a number of "Independent ministers from England"<sup>43</sup> some of whom occasionally preached on the nature of a church of Christ, on the materials of which it is composed and on the laws by which it is governed, as contained in the Statute Book -- the New Testament.<sup>44</sup>

These views led some of those who heard them to entertain Independent conceptions of church government and they joined in the formation of a church, to the pastorate of which Mr. James Haldane was elected. The church was formed in December, 1798 and Haldane was ordained on February 3, 1799. Robert Haldane speaks thus of the church meeting in the Tabernacle:

With respect to the doctrines taught, they are essentially the same as those contained in the Confession of faith and in the articles of the Church of England, and preached by those in the Church of Scotland denominated evangelical or gospel ministers. The form of church government is what has been called congregational. It is exercised in the presence of the church itself, by its pastor and church officers and with the consent of its members, independent of any other jurisdiction, a form long known and

acted upon in England. A strict discipline is also maintained. The characters of all persons admitted as church members are particularly examined and great numbers have been rejected, either from ignorance of the Gospel or from not appearing to maintain a becoming walk and conversation. The church members are exhorted to watch over each other in love; if any be overtaken in a fault, he is reproved, but if convicted of departing from the faith of the gospel, of deliberate immorality or allowed and continued indulgence in sin, he is put away; and restored only upon credible proofs of repentance. Such regulations we believe to be according to scripture and calculated to promote edification."<sup>45</sup>

Robert Haldane, while accompanying Rowland Hill back to England in September 1798, conceived the idea of establishing places of worship, similar to Mr. Whitefield's tabernacles, in various cities of Scotland, and providing theological education under the tutelage of Dr. Bogue.<sup>46</sup> Haldane thought of his brother, James, as the preacher at the Circus and possibly Innes and Ewing, who had now withdrawn from the Church of Scotland, at Dundee and Glasgow.

"I supposed while my brother could supply the Circus as the stated minister, Messrs. Ewing and Innes, who were to have accompanied me to Bengal, would be well calculated for the other places; and that an interchange might now and then be made with the houses of the same kind, which had been erected at Perth and Caithness; and that any others which afterwards should be erected upon similar plans, through the country, if they conformed to the same strict and scriptural discipline, might be united as far as congregational principles admit."<sup>47</sup>

These churches, like their English prototypes, were called Tabernacles. They were places where many people might come to hear a man preach. Temporary in character, they were no doubt unlovely in comparison with the established churches

of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, and Dundee. The Tabernacle or Circus Church in Edinburgh, when constituted in January 9/1 29 of 1799, immediately drew 310 persons into its membership (but the building accommodated 3200 and was usually filled). Thirty of these continued as members of the Established Church. Some of the others were converts of Haldane or Hill but many were regular members of the churches of Erskine, Black, Colquhoun and Buchanan and their withdrawal from the Church of Scotland and the particular churches to which these men ministered was scarcely a source of pleasure to the clergy.

*As* Haldane, it must be remembered, was a lay preacher who in his Journal had warmly defended his practise. Now he was to be ordained. The ceremony took place on Sunday, February 3, 1799. As part of the proceedings, Mr. Haldane was asked the following questions:

- "1st As an unconverted ministry is allowed to be a great evil, will you, Sir, be pleased to favor us with some account of the dealing of God with your soul?
- 2dly Will you inform us what are the circumstances and motives which have led you to preach the Gospel, and to desire to engage in the work of the ministry?
- 3dly Will you favor us with your views of the leading truths of the Gospel?
- 4thly Will you explain your views and purposes respecting the duties and trials before you in the pastoral office?"<sup>48</sup>

These are precisely the questions which the candidate for ordination in the Congregational churches in the United States is asked to answer in a paper prepared by him for the

Ordaining Council. The entire service, in fact, presents striking parallels to the present practise of our churches, with the significant difference that Haldane was not ordained by a Council representing other Congregational Churches but by the church which had called him to be its minister, and a few invited individuals who were themselves ministers, though as yet not ordained in the denomination to which they now gave their allegiance. There was one service lasting five hours, whereas the present practise is for the Council to meet as an examining body in the afternoon to hear the candidate's paper and his answers to their questions, then if their judgment be that he is qualified for ordination (and a vote is taken in which only duly qualified representatives of the churches may participate) to meet in the evening for the service of Ordination.

So, according to his biographer,<sup>49</sup> James Haldane became "the first minister of the first church formed amongst the new Congregationalist Churches of Scotland."<sup>50</sup> He received no salary, as he needed none. The whole of the income of the church, after payment of expenses, was devoted to the Society for Propagating the Gospel.

Robert Haldane, having seen his brother installed in the first church in Edinburgh, quickly put into effect the rest of his plan. He purchased the Circus in Jamaica Street, Glasgow, at a cost of 3,000 pounds and converted it into a Tabernacle for the church of which Greville Ewing was to be pastor. Ewing and Haldane went to Stirling to urge Innes to

become the minister at Dundee. Still a minister of the Church of Scotland, Innes withdrew, as Ewing had before him, and accepted the charge. Haldane guaranteed the minister's salaries in both cases, in addition to providing for the expenses of the churches. As income began to come from these churches, it was to be applied to the support of the plan for preparing young men for the ministry.

The financial subsidy of Congregationalism in its early years in Scotland was so great and so single in its source that it might safely be said that these churches could not have come into being had it not been for the 60,000 to 70,000 pounds that Robert Haldane was able and willing to expend between 1799-1810. Even if there had been no devoted and wealthy patron, however, the zeal for evangelism was so great and the opposition on the part of the established church and other churches so determined that some new churches must have come into being.



## The Opposition of the Established Church

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, meeting in May, 1799, had a number of irksome problems to consider in relation to the irregular movement of evangelism that was sweeping the country. There were the tours of Haldane, Ewing, Aikman, and Rate. There were the sermons of Rowland Hill, heard by vast multitudes on Calton Hill the year before (and Mr. Hill was returning very soon!). There was the Circus Church in Edinburgh and the other Tabernacle Churches. But above all, there were the constantly reiterated criticisms of the Church of Scotland and its ministers, expressed by men who claimed to have a concern for the Gospel and a dedication to it unknown in the Establishment. And there were those whisperings of radicalism. Were not the Haldanes known to be supporters of the revolutionaries and atheists in France? So, we read in the report of the Assembly in the Edinburgh Advertiser for May 28, 1799 -- "Overtures, from the Synod of Aberdeen, and that of Angus and Mearns, respecting vagrant teachers and Sunday-schools, irreligion and anarchy (were presented)." The Assembly unanimously agreed to the overtures, and prohibited all persons from preaching, in any place under their jurisdiction, who were not licensed by some Presbytery, and also those who were from England, or any other place, and who had not first been educated and licensed in Scotland. It also resolved that a "Pastoral Admonition" be addressed by the Assembly, to all the people



under their charge.<sup>51</sup>

The "Pastoral Admonition" was strong meat. It began by linking the evangelistic movement in Scotland with recent events in France. It named the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home as made up of men "whose proceedings threaten no small disorder to the country,"<sup>52</sup> whose spirit was that of "ambition and vanity"<sup>53</sup> and whose effect was not only to "unsettle the minds of many" but to use "the name of liberty. . . as a cover to secret democracy (sic) and anarchy."<sup>54</sup>

The combination of prohibition and admonition startled the public and further aroused the passions to which the General Assembly was referring. Rowland Hill shouted and stormed against the "Assembly's Bull" and rang the changes on his sarcastic descriptions of its originators. Says his biographer, "He was completely led from his great work, and appears to have preached more against the Established and Secession churches, than against the kingdom of Satan."<sup>55</sup> There were apparently times when he implied that the two were one and the same. Robert Haldane's dignified and impressive "Address to the Public, Concerning Political Opinions and Plans Lately Adopted to Promote Religion in Scotland" is a far better answer to the Assembly's admonition than Hill's sermons, but it must have been the sermons that were heard by most and taken to be the answer of the Congregational churches and leaders. Not an auspicious beginning for a denomination, but who was to blame? A later session of the General Assembly

(1842) rescinded the act passed in 1799 and scored the act and the Admonition as "discreditable to the Church of Scotland -- one of the blackest acts the Church of Scotland ever passed -- passed not to exclude heresy from our pulpits, but to exclude truth."<sup>56</sup>

It was apparent after May, 1799, if it had not been before, that the path of the churches formed by the Haldanes and their associates must be one quite apart from the Established Church. It is difficult to believe that Robert Haldane, at least, had not anticipated this for his plans, already described, were hardly those of a man determined to stay within the Church of Scotland.

James Haldane was of a different mind -- or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that, since he was the pastor and not the promoter, it was possible for him to retain his conviction that the new churches need not depart from the Establishment. Speaking of the Tabernacle Church, he says,

"It was in fact no separation from the Establishment. It was merely opening another place of worship for preaching the Gospel without regard to forms of external arrangement or Church order, and where the pastor and many of the members showed their catholic spirit by going to the Sacrament in the Established Church. Add to this, that the preaching was almost entirely addressed to the people of the world."<sup>57</sup>

Greville Ewing, however, in the pages of the Missionary Magazine, in his preaching and his teaching, advocated a form of church order which would be in close harmony with that of the early Christian church. The development of a considered

church polity, the withdrawal of the Haldanes, the controversy regarding baptism, the formation of a Congregational Union, and the growth of Tabernacles into Churches must be considered in a later chapter in relation to the life and work of the man who was destined to become one of the most respected ministers of the Congregational churches of Scotland.

We have seen the way by which Congregationalism in Scotland came. One path leads from George Whitefield through Rowland Hill; the other comes through David Bogue ✓ whose influence upon the Haldanes is immeasurable. But both Bogue and Hill, we remember, were charter founders of the London Missionary Society, of which Bogue may be said to be the spiritual father. Robert Haldane was a thwarted missionary to India. His brother, James, found his sure calling in preaching journeys to the wild north and the islands of Scotland. The iron-monger, Campbell, whose passion for the founding of Sabbath-schools led James Haldane into the work of evangelism, was one of those whom Robert Haldane most desired to have with him in India, and he later became a missionary traveller in the unexplored interior of Africa. The Moderates who shrugged off the passion for foreign missions by pointing to "the heathen at home" were soon to pronounce their judgment upon the movement that had been founded for the evangelizing of Scotland. Whatever pattern may be seen to emerge from all this, it is clear that the Congregational churches, now coming

into being, were the products of missionary spirit and evangelical zeal. A young man of twenty, as Ralph Wardlaw was in 1799, might well look to this movement and decide that, despite its extra-official ecclesiastical character and the aspersions cast upon it by those in authority, it promised well for the Kingdom of Christ, and could rightly command his loyalty.

## CHAPTER II

RALPH WARDLAW'S EARLY YEARS  
1779-1803

Ralph Wardlaw was the son of William and Anne Wardlaw, and was born at Dalkeith, six miles south of Edinburgh in the county of Midlothian, on December 22, 1779.<sup>1</sup> Mention has been made of his maternal ancestry in connection with the discussion of the Secession Church. Wardlaw's biographer speaks also of his connection on his father's side with "the ancient Anglo-Saxon house of Wardlaw of Pitreavie in Fife; the same, which in the beginning of the fifteenth century, furnished a distinguished benefactor to his country in the person of Henry Wardlaw, Bishop of St. Andrews. . ."<sup>2</sup> William Wardlaw moved to Glasgow six months after the birth of his son Ralph (who was the fourth in a family of eight children born of a second marriage) and spent the remainder of his life in that city. "He became a burgess and guild brother of that city in 1786, and a matriculated member of the Merchants' house in the following year. Universally respected as a citizen and as a merchant, he attained civic honors as one of the bailies of the city. . ."<sup>3</sup>

Wardlaw was educated in the public schools of Glasgow and at the University of Glasgow from 1791-96. At the time he entered the University, he was not quite twelve years of age.

It is hardly necessary to add that the "University" of that day was more like the "high school" of today, "where the elementary tuition commenced in the grammar school was carried forward a few stages."<sup>4</sup> Since it had been William Wardlaw's custom to have the New Testament in Greek read to him each morning, while dressing, by his little son, Ralph, there is every indication that <sup>the boy</sup> he was well prepared to profit from his attendance for four sessions on the Greek classes taught by Professor Young. A notable feature of Wardlaw's preaching and writing, as will be noted later, was his insistence upon careful examination of the Scriptural source of every belief and doctrine. It is apparent that he was not a flashing genius but an unusually painstaking and patient student, then and later.

In addition to the Latin and Greek classes, Wardlaw is described as having attended, in his fourth year, the class in Logic. The favorite text-book of Professor Jardine was the *Novum Organum* of Bacon. In his fifth and sixth sessions, he attended the classes in Ethics and Natural Philosophy. The other studies mentioned are mathematics, Botany, Anatomy and attendance at the lectures in divinity as a voluntary student.

Wardlaw described his religious impressions as "of dateless origin and of imperceptibly gradual development."<sup>5</sup> His mother had died when he was six; his father, a man of strong character and marked affection for his son, was the principal influence upon his life. Wardlaw's own character



and gifts led him and others to feel that he was admirably qualified for a career as a teacher of religion. Since his church was the Burgher Synod of the Associate Secession Church, he entered the school at Selkirk whose President was Dr. George Lawson. The prescribed period of attendance was five sessions of nine weeks each. An interesting record of the method and content of teaching under Dr. Lawson at Selkirk is preserved in McKerrow's History of the Secession Church.<sup>6</sup> Little record remains of Wardlaw's life during this period, save for his participation, in a minor way, in the controversy then rising in the Burgher Church between the "Old Lights" and the "New Lights."

It is difficult to describe the merits of this controversy briefly, but it does have significance in the study of Wardlaw's life and thought, inasmuch as it relates to the troubled question of the authority of the state in matters of faith. Suffice it to say that the Burghers, or some of them at least, became concerned about the right given the civil magistrate in the Confession of Faith to "take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented and reformed, and all ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed."<sup>7</sup> At the time of the Secession, the Confession of Faith had been retained in whole and without qualifications, but now Presbyteries were being called upon to

license and ordain men who could not adhere to it on this subject. It was therefore proposed to make the question respecting the power of the civil magistrate in religion a matter of forbearance: to allow each man to hold his own opinion in regard to it without prejudice to his ecclesiastical status. It was proposed that the same principle be applied to the question of the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant of 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. (Certain Presbyteries had been neglecting to insist upon an acknowledgment of these as binding, also.) The opponents of a measure which would regularize this procedure were called "Old Lights." The adherents to modification were "New Lights."

Now this is an issue which will be seen to have a prominent part to play in the life of Wardlaw, who if he is remembered at all is likely to be placed in history as one who participated in the debates concerning church establishment -- rather than as a theologian who wrote on the Atonement. It is interesting then to see him, while still a student, writing a poem (a very bad poem, despite the good things said about it by <sup>Winton</sup> Alexander) in refutation of the statement of an "Old Light" pastor of Glasgow named Porteous. From the portions of the poem that are given, there appears to be little serious effort made to answer the allegations of Dr. Porteous regarding the supposed political aberrations of the "New Lights." These statements were answered effectively by Dr. Peddie of Edinburgh and an investigation by Lord Advocate

Maconachie absolved the Associate Synod (from which the opposition had now withdrawn, forming the "Old Light or Original Burghers") of any suspicion of disloyalty.

But, this poem of Wardlaw's, "a farewell service to the ecclesiastical body it was designed to vindicate"<sup>8</sup> denotes his interest in a controversy which must inevitably have turned his attention to matters of relationship of church and state which were to engage him so deeply in the future.

Why did Wardlaw leave his own church and become a Congregationalist? As we have seen from our review of the rise of that denomination in Scotland, there was in its history, no deliberate secession from an established church as in 1733 and 1843. As Alexander (who was not only Wardlaw's biographer but a very prominent Congregationalist) says rather well,

"Theirs was from the beginning a movement of a purely spiritual kind. Like Methodism in England, the secession which they headed had its source in a craving for more life, more energy, more spiritual freedom and diffusiveness than they could find in existing systems. They felt a need for a higher kind of spiritual nourishment than they had been accustomed to, and for more of warmth and heartiness in the proclamation of religious truth to men than the fashion of pulpit address at that time permitted. They mourned over the want of Christian fellowship, sympathy, and cooperation in the churches, all of which had come to wither under the blight of a stiff and jealous officialism. And they sorrowed most of all for the multitudes who were living around them in ignorance and in sin, misled by unsound teaching, or left to perish without teaching of any kind. Could they have found the remedy of these evils and the securing of the desiderated benefits in religious societies with which they were already connected, it was not in their minds to

have ever forsaken these. On the contrary, they rather clung to them with filial affection; nor was it until they were treated as unworthy and rebellious children -- their requests refused, their longing desires scorned, their evangelistic efforts repressed and punished, and the whole machinery of ecclesiastical despotism put in operation to suppress and terrify them -- that they asserted their rights as men whom the truth had made free, and availed themselves of the liberty conceded to them by the laws of their country, to unfurl the banner of an independent communion, unfettered either by state control or ecclesiastical domination."<sup>9</sup>

A completely objective critic would modify certain parts of this declaration, but it states an important truth: Congregationalism in Scotland originated almost by accident when an evangelistic movement, refused standing by the church of which its leaders were members, called upon English Independents for assistance. The most obvious way for Wardlaw to be drawn into the movement would be through interest in or participation in the evangelistic work.

There is no record of such participation at the beginning. Wardlaw became an itinerant evangelist after he became a Congregationalist and his experiences in this work could therefore have had no influence upon his decision. Wardlaw became a Congregationalist, we would maintain, because of his concern for a type of polity which would be in his opinion founded upon the practise of the New Testament church. It would not be fair to say that he was uninterested in evangelism. More to the point is the observation that when he became, later in life, the most outstanding advocate in his denomination of the voluntary principle, it was a logical

development of an early and consistent interest. He was, as far as we have been able to discover, the first man ordained in the Congregational church in Scotland whose choice of the denomination was made almost wholly on the grounds of its polity. denom?  
or any?

Support for this contention is given by his own statement in a letter to a relative concerning Principal Campbell's "Lectures in Ecclesiastical History:" (August 12, 1801). "It is a book from which I derived much entertainment, from which I expect to derive more instruction, and which did more towards making me a thorough-paced Independent than anything I had formerly seen or heard."<sup>10</sup> (Italics are Wardlaw's). Campbell was Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen and the lectures were delivered there. The book was reviewed at great length in several issues of the Missionary Magazine in 1802 and 1803. The edition which I examined was published in Philadelphia in 1807 and contains, in addition to the Lectures, Principal Campbell's "Essay on Miracles" written to refute David Hume. It is easy to see how these Lectures, read at the time of the Old Light-New Light controversy, would provide not only impressive support for the New Light position but suggestions that even they were stopping far short of the proper conclusion in the matter. A few quotations will indicate this:

"...true religion is of too delicate a nature to be compelled...by the coarse implements of human authority and worldly sanctions. Let the law of the land restrain vice and injustice of



every kind, as ruinous to the peace and order of society, for this is its proper province; but let it not tamper with religion by attempting to enforce its exercises and duties. These, unless they be free-will offerings, are nothing; they are worse. By such an unnatural alliance, and ill-judged aid, hypocrisy and superstition may, indeed, be greatly promoted, but genuine piety never fails to suffer."<sup>11</sup>

✓ "Now nothing can be conceived more absurd in itself, or more contradictory to the declarations of Scripture than to say that a man's belief and obedience of the Gospel, however genuine the one and however sincere the other, are of no significance unless he has received his information of the Gospel, or been initiated into the church by a proper minister."<sup>12</sup>

That Principal Campbell was, and remained, a loyal member of the Established Church has little to do with the matter. Wardlaw, unquestionably, was moved by his book<sup>13</sup> and in 1800 united with the church recently formed in Glasgow under the pastoral care of Greville Ewing. In December, 1800 we find him preaching in the Circus. In the early part of 1801, he supplied the church meeting at St. Paul's Chapel in Perth and continued there, with short interruptions until October. He preached frequently in the surrounding country and exchanged pulpits with brother ministers. Declining an invitation to gather a church at Perth, which might continue to meet in the St. Paul's Chapel after the congregation to which he was temporarily ministering entered their new church, he accepted the proposal of friends that a church be built in Glasgow for his ministry. The new congregation would be made up, in part, of members of Mr. Ewing's church. Wardlaw had some misgivings about this and the "semblance of patronage" that he saw in the proposal. Mr. Ewing demonstrated a fine



spirit in urging the establishment of the church and other needs for a church than merely that of providing a pulpit for a new minister, emerged. Ground was secured in North Albion Street but it was not until February 16, 1803 that the new church was opened and its minister ordained.

In the period intervening between his service at Perth and his ordination in Glasgow, Wardlaw supplied Congregational churches in Dumfries and Edinburgh and travelled with the Rev. Andrew Fuller, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society.

## CHAPTER III

WARDLAW AND THE YOUNG CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES:  
 A PERIOD OF GROWTH AND STRIFE  
 1803-1813

The Church in North Albion Street did not grow quickly. In a letter to a friend dated May 9, 1803, Wardlaw comments on this and makes a statement regarding the nature of the church which closely agrees with that of Haldane in his Address to the People:

" . . . in societies where the church is the church, and a few lords over the heritage are not substituted in its place -- where the members associate for mutual exhortation and discipline as well as meet statedly for public worship -- where there subsists necessarily much more frequent and intimate fellowship, it is impossible we can prosper, in the right sense of the word, without strict attention to purity of communion and the cultivation of fervent brotherly love; a principle, by the bye, which, from the frequency and urgency of the apostolic exhortations respecting it, seems to have been more needful for the prosperity of churches as then constituted, however that was, then, it is for churches constituted on different principles from ours. They who need this principle most for their order and prosperity are probably nearest, therefore, to the apostolic plan."<sup>1</sup>

It is emphasized by Alexander that the Congregational churches of that time did not make the adoption of Congregational principles a term of communion. Wardlaw's own father said when he joined his son's church, "Now, Ralph, you must just take me, Presbyterianism and all."<sup>2</sup> The attempt was made, however, to safeguard that purity of communion to which Wardlaw refers. In this, the Scottish Congregationalists were being

true to the views of Robert Browne, founder of their denomination, of whom H. M. Dexter says,

"... the one original, urgent, controlling thought, which grew to be a burden upon his soul which he could no longer carry, was that of the laxness, the corruption, the practical ungodliness of those parish assemblies of all sorts of persons which were the only churches that the Church of England knew."<sup>3</sup>

### The Lord's Supper

Mr. Aikman, who with Haldane and Rate, made the first preaching tours, declared that before the secession from the Establishment mixed communion in the Lord's Supper had been to him and others an "intolerable burden."<sup>4</sup> So it was with Browne and his followers in the 16th century. R. W. Dale in his History of English Congregationalism says,

"The early Congregationalists maintained that a man is not necessarily a Christian because he is an Englishman, and that the evil lives of large numbers of Englishmen were a clear proof that they were not Christians, and, therefore, were not proper members of a Christian Church. To recover the idea of the Church, Browne and his disciples believed that it was necessary, first of all, to reject and tear to pieces the fiction which treated the English nation or an English diocese or an English parish as a Church of Christ; and then to establish what were called 'gathered churches,' consisting of those 'Christian believers which, by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ, and keep his laws in one holy communion.'"<sup>5</sup>

He further remarks,

"They believed that in receiving or rejecting members, or excommunicating those who had proved themselves unworthy, and in the election of its officers, it is the duty of each separate Church to learn for itself the will of Christ and to do it."<sup>6</sup>

There was a large amount of protest uttered against the laxness of the Established Church, both in theology and practise, by the Congregationalists in the first decade of their life in Scotland. The part of their practise which involved them in the greatest difficulty, however, was not this fight against evils in the Church of Scotland but the inner warfare occasioned by the valiant attempt of "each separate Church to learn for itself the will of Christ and to do it." Men who would carry their protest against the church in which they were nurtured to the point of withdrawing from it were not likely to surrender their freedom of speech and opinion for the sake of harmony in the new fellowship. Greville Ewing, editing the Missionary Magazine, had ample opportunity for the expression of his own point of view on churchmanship. That he availed himself of the opportunity is apparent when one examines the issues of the magazine from 1800 to 1804. He was zealously advocating an attempt by the churches to approximate as nearly as possible the practises of the primitive Christian churches. The influence of Glas and Sandeman is apparent, and it is recorded that he presented the views of these men to his students with great enthusiasm.

It was Greville Ewing who instituted the custom of observing the Lord's Supper each Sunday, in his church in Glasgow. James Haldane supported this practise in a letter written "To the Church Assembling for Worship in the Tabernacle, Edinburgh," dated March 26, 1802. He makes a strong appeal

for change from their present practise (celebrating Communion once a month) saying, "we need not be ashamed of any alteration warranted by the word of God."<sup>7</sup>

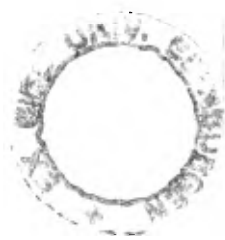
He submits to the congregation his own conclusions on the matter, drawn wholly from the New Testament record, and prefaces his exposition with these words,

"The grand principle in which the first Reformers justified their conduct in separating from the Church of Rome, was this, That the Bible contained the whole of religion; that, being a revelation of the will of God, nothing could lawfully be added or taken from it; that it could derive no additional authority from men, and that every man was bound to study it for himself. Let it be our care in every case to act upon it. Let our appeal ever be made to the law and to the testimony."<sup>8</sup>

His own appeal is to the practise of the church at Troas; and the church at Corinth. Perhaps the most important words in the letter are these: ". . .the customs of the apostles, and the churches, as regulated by them, are binding on us."<sup>9</sup> (Italics are Haldane's). All of the churches, apparently, accepted weekly Communion but unanimity was not easily to be maintained thereafter. In his last paragraph Haldane says, "We have much cause, my brethren, to be thankful for the unanimity which has prevailed amongst us; may our Lord continue and increase it."<sup>10</sup>

### Social Worship

Mr. Ewing in his "Rules of Church Government" advised that: "Besides the ordinary public worship of the Lord's Day, there shall be a Church-meeting weekly, for the purposes of



church  
Haldane's  
to read  
the  
the  
the  
the  
the



social worship, discipline, and mutual edification."<sup>11</sup>

In "social worship," Ewing included the practise of having lay members lead in prayer; "mutual edification" meant the members, either spontaneously or by appointment, offering an exhortation on a passage of Scripture. These "Rules" were those which were laid down for the admitting of members into his church in Glasgow when it was formed in August, 1800.<sup>12</sup> His daughter remarks that "this plan was proposed by my father as affording what he long before had wished for, namely, 'a fellowship-meeting on a large scale.'"<sup>13</sup>

She here refers back to 1795 when, Ewing says, he was turning this matter over in his mind while still a minister of the Established Church.

Regarding weekly Communion and social worship, particularly the practise of mutual edification, Ewing was prepared to exercise forbearance provided others with opposite views would do the same.

"The principle on which exhortation was adopted in our church, was this, that those who thought it positively enjoined in Scripture, should be satisfied they obeyed Scripture, by the proposed practise, on a week-day; and that those who did not think it so enjoined, should be willing, on the admission of the lawfulness of the exercise, that a week-day meeting should be so employed."<sup>14</sup>

In other words, stay away if this is not for you but do not keep others from coming. This seems reasonable enough, as did the attitude toward weekly Communion:



"I thought it my duty. . . but I added that, if all present were not of that opinion, it would satisfy me, if they consented to it as lawful. . . and one of our reasons for admitting occasional communicants. . . was that we wished to receive those, we believed to be lovers of Christ, whenever they desired it, though they might not feel at liberty to practise weekly communion at all."<sup>15</sup>

James Haldane again seconded Mr. Ewing but went further, and his "View of Social Worship" issued in 1805, advocated that social worship should be held on the Lord's Day. For if it were really one of the means appointed by Christ for the public edification of the Church, it must be proper on that day. Furthermore, he now states that

"there is the greatest reason to presume, that the New Testament contains instructions concerning every part of the worship and conduct of Christian societies, as well as concerning the faith and practise of individuals."<sup>16</sup>

This book is long and takes up with great exactness the arguments for and against the practises which are now coming <sup>were</sup> into acceptance in the Congregational churches. His advocacy of these practises is determined, and as indicated, he desires to extend their scope, but, in an admirable chapter on "Forbearance," he takes the position that

"it is perfectly consistent with strict scriptural discipline, to hold communion with those who believe the gospel and are exemplary in their conduct, while they are ignorant on some points which we consider to be revealed by God."<sup>17</sup>

Yet that ignorance cannot be considered to have lasting value:

"Although Christians will probably be always called to exercise forbearance to each other in consequence of difference of judgment on some points, yet in proportion as they simply follow the word of God according to the light they have received, these points of difference will be diminishing."<sup>18</sup>

The book was irenic in tone but the principle enunciated in it (strict adherence to the New Testament as containing a complete rule of worship and conduct of the churches) was bound to cause difficulty. The views of Ewing and Haldane and of Alexander Carson, who had published his reasons for leaving the General Synod of Ulster, were answered by Brown of Langton and others. Especially dangerous, from the point of view of the critics, were the attitudes toward the pastor's office. Haldane had favored in his book a plurality of elders, forming a presbytery in each church.<sup>19</sup> In this, he was supporting the views of Ballantine whom he quotes with approval.<sup>20</sup> The publication of Ballantine's from which he quotes is "Observations on Confessions of Faith," the second edition published in Edinburgh in 1804.<sup>21</sup>

Ballantine was pastor of the Tabernacle at Elgin, built by Robert Haldane, and he had a class of missionary students under his care. Robert Kinniburgh in his "Historical Survey of Congregationalism in Scotland" (in the Jubilee Memorial)<sup>22</sup> refers to a later publication of Ballantyne's (his spelling) as constituting "a withering blast from the north. . . attended by direful consequences." This was the "Treatise on the Elder's Office" which was circulated among

the churches in 1807. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to obtain a copy of this treatise but it was apparently a vigorous argument against the strict separation of ministers and laymen and caused a tumult among the churches.

Congregationalism had received its power as a new movement in Scotland from dedicated laymen, but it was now in the process of establishing churches and the assertion that the office of minister is hardly distinguishable from that of the laymen was a threat to the order of the churches.

### Baptism

During the time that these issues were being discussed in pamphlets, sermons and church meetings, another threat to the future of Congregationalism was appearing. Members of Congregational churches were being re-baptized and in many cases joining Baptist churches.

In Wardlaw's church, the Friday night meetings for social worship were conducted and Communion was apparently administered each Sunday. But he, too, was a believer in forbearance and even at the time (1804-5) that some of his members were leaving him to join the Baptist fold, he welcomed Andrew Fuller of the Baptist Missionary Society.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, he desired the re-baptized members of his church to remain in full communion, but apparently other members objected.<sup>24</sup> He determined to stem the tide of disaffection if possible and delivered to his congregation, as part of his exposition of Romans, three Lectures on Romans 4: 9-25 in which he sought

to prove that baptism (the equivalent to circumcision) is rightly administered to the same class of persons as that to which circumcision was administered, i.e., the infant offspring of believers and to adult converts. These lectures were given to the public in 1807 and constituted his first published work.

Now, however, James Haldane was to present the Congregational churches with a critical decision. In a letter to Campbell dated February 19, 1808, he states that he can no longer conscientiously baptize children but that, in his opinion, "Baptists and Paedo-Baptists might have fellowship together."<sup>25</sup> On April 21, he informed Campbell that he had been baptized but that in regard to the church this was to be a matter of forbearance.<sup>26</sup> In that year (or early in 1809: my edition of 1809 is the second) he published "Reasons of a Change of Sentiment and Practise on the Subject of Baptism." In this pamphlet, he traces his own thinking on the matter of baptism and then treats in detail the argument for infant baptism as derived from the Abrahamic Covenant. He argues that there is, in an argument like Wardlaw's, a mistaken view of the covenant with Abraham which does not in fact apply at all to us. ". . . as to any believer imagining, that the promise to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. is likewise made to him, nothing can be more unfounded."<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, "all arguments for baptism from circumcision. . . are inconclusive."<sup>28</sup> "Only some believers were circumcised --

all are to be baptized. . . . circumcision is now abolished by divine authority, at least forbidden to the Gentiles."<sup>29</sup>

#### Disruption of the Tabernacles in Edinburgh and Glasgow

Haldane hoped that his change in views would not cause a split in the church, but that was too much to expect. The combination of his espousal of Ballantine's extreme views regarding the pastoral office with his shift on baptism furthered the process of fission that had already begun in the Tabernacle Church of Edinburgh. Robert Haldane describes the disruption in his "Letters to Mr. Ewing" published in 1809:

"Some of the members went back to the Established Church, some to the Church in College-street (Mr. Aikman's) others to that in Niddry-street (Mr. Maclean's) while a considerable number determined to become a separate Church and rent a large room to meet in. The rest remained with my brother, in the Tabernacle."

Differences between Robert Haldane and Ewing aggravated the situation, especially when Ewing encouraged the separatists and went to Edinburgh to help them establish themselves in a new place of meeting. Wardlaw associated himself with Aikman and Ewing in this matter and a letter written to his father on March 26, 1808 describes the events:

"Matters here are now come to their crisis. There was a second meeting last night at the Tabernacle, which Mr. R. Haldane opened, after the ordinary worship, with a speech of an hour and three quarters in length!! delivered with the utmost deliberation. He was interrupted towards the close by the pertinent question; whether the whole meeting was to be occupied



with his charges. . . Mr. Aikman and I though absent came in for our share of the criminating charges. . . Bernard's Rooms are to be opened tomorrow in the midst of accusations of hurry and precipitation, which seem to me as destitute of foundation as ever charges were in this world. . . I feel it truly comfortable in the midst of all accusations to have my mind perfectly satisfied with regard to the path of duty to give my countenance to the brethren who desire to separate in peace upon just and scriptural grounds, after mature deliberation, and on clear and full conviction."<sup>30</sup>

Aikman also expressed himself with great firmness:

"I perceive it to be of much importance for the general good of the cause to have no visible or Church fellowship with brethren who have for years past. . . been acting upon a system which appears to be destructive, both of the pastoral office and of all order in the house of God."

#### The Church

"after long and painful discussion, decided to act upon their acknowledged principles, and to decline the relation of a sister Church with a Church composed of Baptists and Paedo-Baptists, under a Baptist pastor."<sup>31</sup>

Robert Haldane, a year later, became a Baptist. 1829-10

This disruption of the Edinburgh Church and the subsequent withdrawal of support, by Robert Haldane, of the churches which he had founded was a most serious blow to Congregationalism in Scotland. Kinniburgh, with great frankness, says of this period,

"Anarchy prevailed in the churches and in some cases a beautiful fabric became a shattered ruin. The pious of other bodies, who were inclined to favour our system, shrank with sorrow and alarm, from what appeared to them so disastrous an experiment of Congregational principles. Thus many stumbling-blocks were laid in the way, both of Christians and unbelievers."<sup>32</sup>



The bitter exchange of letters between Robert Haldane and Greville Ewing is an indication not only of the difficult position churches and ministers were in because of the withdrawal of his support but the ambiguous and dangerous position they had been in all along in being, in effect, his private foundations. Kinniburgh says,

"Many of the churches were poor; and if they had hitherto been unable to support their pastors, much less were they able now, that they were divided in sentiment, fewer in number, and all foreign aid withdrawn from them. In consequence of these things, some of the pastors retired from the work. Some, who continued at their posts, betook themselves to teaching schools, whilst others continued to labour, managing, as they could, to subsist upon the slender support which their people could afford."<sup>33</sup>

Ewing was forced to surrender the Tabernacle Church in Glasgow and resigned his charge, but was immediately recalled by his congregation and services were held in the Trades' Hall with other meetings at Albion Street Chapel, Wardlaw's church. The latter, having had no subsidy from Haldane, was in a much stronger position when the split came and only a very small secession from the church took place.

Apparently the members of Ewing's church were not all satisfied with his actions, for some of them joined the Albion Street Church and, after becoming members, sought to sever the church from that under the care of Mr. Ewing. Wardlaw opposed this step and appointed a committee to discover the grounds for complaint. These were found to be for

the most part trivial and it was evident that the complaints were coming from a small group of trouble-makers. There was, however, the matter of relationship between two free churches to be determined and Wardlaw read several papers on the subject to his congregation. These presented a cogent and forceful defense of the combined principles of freedom and association which are so essential to the congregational system. Wardlaw's biographer is probably correct when he states that "the principles laid down in this paper are those on which the Independent churches have continued to act."<sup>34</sup>

#### Formation of the Congregational Union of Scotland

The Congregational churches, weakened by dissension<sup>4</sup> and schism and cut off from the financial assistance provided so liberally by Robert Haldane in the previous years, were now forced to find within themselves the resources with which to carry on not only their own life but the work of evangelism and ministerial education. With the efforts in this field, between 1808 and 1812, Ralph Wardlaw is closely associated. In April, 1809 a meeting of pastors in the west of Scotland was convened at Glasgow and arrangements made for the carrying on of itinerant preaching in Angus, Ayr, Galloway, and Orkney. Wardlaw took part in this work. But an even more important problem before the churches was the lack of a continuing source of pastoral leadership because of the closing of the theological academies which Haldane had so generously supported.

Preliminary consultations issued in action taken on March 13, 1811 to form the Glasgow Theological Academy. Ewing and Wardlaw were asked to undertake the duties of instruction and a plan of education was adopted. Wardlaw thus began the teaching which continued for over forty years. He also visited the churches of the north to gain support for the new venture.

In November, 1812, the Congregational Union of Scotland was formed. Its object was

"the relief of Congregational churches in Scotland, united in the faith and hope of the Gospel; who from their poverty, the fewness of their members, or from debt upon their places of worship, are unable to provide for the ministration of the word of God, in that way which would tend most to their own edification and the eternal happiness of those around them."<sup>35</sup>

The Regulations of the Institution indicate its purpose and the simple principles upon which it was founded. It was a "Home Missionary Society:"

"I. This Institution shall be denominated, 'The Congregational Union of Scotland,' and its object shall be, to afford to the Churches and Preachers in the connection, such pecuniary assistance as may enable them with advantage to promote the interests of the gospel in their respective neighborhoods, or in the country at large.

II. The Churches, thus united, shall contribute to one general fund, by Annual collections, and by the Donations and Subscriptions of individuals.

III. The funds thus raised, shall be under the management of a Committee, who shall attend to all applications for aid, and afford assistance in all cases, according to the best of their judgment.

IV. An Annual Meeting shall be held at Edinburgh, or wherever it may be deemed most eligible, to receive a Report of the proceedings during the previous year, and to appoint a Committee for the year ensuing; and a Sermon shall then be preached, and a collection made in aid of the Institution.

V. The Committee shall meet one month previously to the General Meeting and at other times, if business should render it necessary, and the annual Collections of the Churches, etc. together with all applications for assistance, shall be sent before the 1st March at furthest.

VI. A Corresponding Committee shall be also appointed in different parts of the country; and all applications from the Churches in their neighborhood shall come recommended by them to the acting Committee."<sup>36</sup>

Wardlaw was to become the outstanding money-raiser for the Union. In three trips to England on behalf of the Union he succeeded in securing contributions from the English churches totalling around 1600 pounds. These Union campaigns were in the years 1821, 1828, and 1832 and after the last trip no help was required by the churches in Scotland from their brothers in England. c/6 612

#### The Contributions of Ralph Wardlaw to the Life and Work of the Churches

The Congregational churches had grown out of uncertain infancy. Failing to show the strength they promised at birth, they had nevertheless survived the separation from the Haldanes who had been perhaps too closely identified, both spiritually and materially, with them. Ralph Wardlaw had passed through his years of apprenticeship as a pastor. He had demonstrated

both wisdom and poise in his conduct of himself and his ministry to his people, in a time of strain and bitterness. He had seen something of the confusion that can arise when men seek to make the Scripture a literal rule in all things, yet he had been confirmed in his own judgment that Congregationalism was supported by the record of the New Testament. The pastor of the Albion Street Chapel had begun to emerge as one of the leaders in that small association of churches in Scotland. Not only was he a leader who could be trusted to act with sincerity, but he had that quality of balance which seemed so strikingly absent from the character of many of his colleagues. He was the type of man needed by the Congregational churches. They had too few of his caliber.

Wardlaw had married Jane Smith, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Smith of Dunfermline on August 23, 1803. There were eleven children born of this marriage and nine survived to maturity. It is impossible, within the compass of this study, to give a full and consecutive account of the life and work of Ralph Wardlaw and that has been done, with more than sufficient detail and amplitude, in the Memoir by William Lindsay Alexander. Our purpose is to examine with care certain aspects of this man's life and thought. It would not be fair, however, to omit all comment on his success as a parent and as a pastor. His letters bear testimony to his constant concern for the spiritual welfare of his children



and his flock. He was an indefatigable worker, as a glance at the books he wrote in addition to the unnumbered sermons preached will indicate. He had, throughout most of his ministry, the responsibility of instructing the divinity students being prepared for the ministry of the Congregational churches of Scotland. He was engaged often in controversy. He had no assistant to share the duties of a church that became very large as the years went by. Yet, he maintained a spirit of beautiful consideration for others and was able to win not only the respect but the warm regard of many with whom he differed radically on matters that aroused, in that day, no little emotion. He was, beyond question, regarded by the English Congregationalists as the most distinguished representative of the denomination in Scotland. It is of no little importance that he was called upon to inaugurate the Congregational Lectures in London, and was later selected to answer Thomas Chalmers' famous London Lectures on Church Establishment by a series of lectures presenting the view of the Independents. He made frequent trips to London on behalf of the Congregational Union of Scotland and was several times a preacher at the Annual Meeting of the London Missionary Society. He must have been rather effective as a money-raiser, for in three trips to England for the Union (in 1821, 1828, and 1832) he raised approximately £1600. p 62



In all the activity characteristic of a busy and influential minister of that day, there would be little of permanent importance were it not for the fact that Ralph Wardlaw was a Congregationalist, that he engaged in controversial discussion on Socinianism, Church Establishment and theories of the Atonement, and that his views on these matters were taken very seriously not only in his own country but in England and the United States. In England, because it was helpful to have a Scotsman say, with ability and force, the things that English Independents had been saying so long and so often that few persons listened outside of their own fellowship. In the United States, because all three issues were live at the time.

Ralph Wardlaw's books sold well in the United States. His honorary degree came from Yale College and was conferred upon him in 1818. Congregationalists in the United States looked upon him as a champion of the Trinitarian faith against the attacks of Unitarianism. His "modified Calvinism" was pleasing to many who were seeking a middle ground between the orthodox position and the heresies of the Unitarians. But fame is fleeting. I have been able to discover no one in this country who has ever heard of Wardlaw, though undoubtedly there are such persons. He is mentioned rarely, and then with brevity, in histories of Congregationalism. Yet I venture to state that he has had some lasting effect upon Congregationalism -- its churchmanship and its theology --

not only in his own country where it is weak, but in England and the United States where its influence has been rather impressive. Justification for this statement must be made in the chapters which follow. It is sufficient here to say that no one of his contemporaries, apparently, doubted his distinction and his influence in his own day. He was one of the founders of Congregationalism in Scotland. He grew to become its most distinguished representative and, in the end, its venerable spiritual father.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE SOCINIAN CONTROVERSY

## History

At the beginning of the year 1812, Wardlaw was engaged in studies concerning the scriptural evidence for the "supreme divinity" of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> His duties as theological tutor were apparently the immediate occasion for these studies, and some of his findings were communicated to the readers of the Missionary Magazine in the issues for that year. On November 15, 1812, the Unitarians of Glasgow opened a Chapel in Union-Place, an occasion marked by the preaching of a Sermon, "The Grounds of Unitarian Dissent" by the pastor, James Yates. Yates and Wardlaw were both members of the "Literary and Commercial Society" of Glasgow and remained in somewhat friendly relationship despite the battles which took place in the following four years. (When Wardlaw felt compelled by the pressure of other duties to relinquish his post as Secretary of the Society, Yates seconded the motion expressing the appreciation of the Society for his services.)

The Sermon preached on this occasion by Mr. Yates, and the publicity then being given to Unitarian sentiments in Glasgow strengthened a resolve on the part of Wardlaw to present his material in the form of lectures to his congregation on a Sunday evening once each month. The series began on the

first Sunday in March, 1813.

"The interest excited by these lectures was great; more especially as Mr. Yates, the Unitarian minister, was in the habit of attending on Mr. Wardlaw's lectures and replying to his statements on a subsequent evening in his own chapel."<sup>2</sup>

Wardlaw had not asked for this kind of pitched battle and did not return Yates' compliment by attending his lectures. Wardlaw's lectures appeared in print in the spring of 1814 and were enthusiastically received, with an edition printed in America being welcomed by the champions of Calvinism in their battle with the Unitarians who were separating from the Congregational church<sup>25</sup>. Almost immediately upon the publication of "Discourses on the Socinian Controversy" by Ralph Wardlaw, Mr. Yates announced his intention of publishing a reply. While Wardlaw was on a trip to Ireland, he received a letter from Yates, written October 17, 1814, in which the latter invited his antagonist to "look over" his manuscript before it went to the press with a view to correcting any misrepresentations of his (Wardlaw's) meaning, correcting any mistakes of Yates (provided this were done by Wardlaw "with convenient brevity"), and retracting any statements now admitted by Wardlaw to be false. In this last work of penitence performed in the pages of Yates' treatise, Wardlaw was to write in a manner which Yates would think "consistent with what is incumbent upon me in defending my side of the question."<sup>3</sup> All of this was climaxed by a post-script: "I shall probably prefix this letter to my reply,

that if any disagreeable consequences do ensue from this controversy, the public may see that I am not responsible for them."<sup>4</sup>

It was a strange and irritating letter, especially since the manuscript to which Yates referred was apparently already at the press. Wardlaw replied on November 7 with a certain amount of asperity, asserting that "the controversy must go in the usual course."<sup>5</sup> It did. Mr. Yates' volume *on* was entitled, "A Vindication of Unitarianism, in reply to Mr. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy." The Rev. John Brown of Biggar replied in a pamphlet entitled, "Strictures on Mr. Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism," which was for the most part an attack upon Yates' exegesis. Wardlaw replied to Yates in a volume published in the summer of 1816, entitled, "Unitarianism incapable of Vindication: a Reply to the Rev. James Yates's Vindication of Unitarianism." Yates issued a sequel to his "Vindication" which remained unanswered, to his annoyance, until 1828 when the fourth edition of the "Discourses" contained a brief explanation by Wardlaw of his reasons for continuing the controversy no further. To one who reads the documents, whatever his final judgment be as to the merits of Trinitarian or Unitarian doctrine, the reason given seems both sound and merciful:

"There was enough before the public to enable them to form a judgment on all . . . material points; and to drain off an important controversy to its dregs has always appeared

to me unfavorable to the interests of truth,  
by giving the appearance of undue consequence  
to subordinate and nonessential topics. . ."<sup>6</sup>

### "The Grounds of Unitarian Dissent"

Since the sermon by Yates at the dedication of the Unitarian Chapel was the opening gun in this controversy, it is necessary to look briefly at its contents. The text was challenging and calculated to give the Unitarian congregation a sense of excitement in being modern fighters for truth: "But this I confess unto thee that, after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers/." The sermon began soberly enough with an appeal to Unitarians to consider carefully the motives which were leading them to "appropriate this house to Unitarian worship."<sup>7</sup> He pointed out to his hearers that

"we dissent from the Establishment and from other sects on points which we think of supreme moment, the use of our Rational faculties, the Object of Religious worship, and the means of obtaining Salvation. . ."<sup>8</sup>

Yates then outlines basic Unitarian doctrines on which all are united: the denial that "Jesus Christ was the eternal God and that he is the object of religious worship;"<sup>9</sup> the affirmation that "the death of Christ was an incalculable blessing to mankind;"<sup>10</sup> rejection of

"the Trinitarian doctrines of satisfaction and vicarious atonement, believing not that Jesus saves his followers from the everlasting misery to which they are supposed to have been doomed in consequence of the sin of their first parents, but that he saves them by the force of his doctrines, precepts and example from vice, ignorance and superstition and from the misery which is their natural result."<sup>11</sup>



He admits that Unitarians differ among themselves on the exact nature and place of Jesus Christ: whether he was an instrument in the hands of God, pre-existent, immaculately conceived or just a human being.<sup>12</sup> They also differ regarding baptism and the question of an Intermediate State as well as on the philosophical doctrines of materialism and necessity.<sup>13</sup>

There are certain "distinguishing principles" of Unitarianism, according to Yates. The first of these (and the most important if one may judge by the amount of space devoted to it) is "the free and unbiased use of the understanding of religious subjects."<sup>14</sup> Yates asserts that a choice must be made between Calvinism and reason, for Calvinism holds that "the mind of man is thoroughly depraved and all its faculties perverted."<sup>15</sup> Unitarians, on the other hand, regard reason as the "most refined and spiritual part of our nature"<sup>16</sup> able to preserve men from error and from vice.<sup>17</sup> Reason infers "the existence of a Creator, great, wise and good. . ."<sup>18</sup> "examines the credentials by which Jesus and his Apostles prove their divine commission"<sup>19</sup> and enables us "to discover the sense and meaning of the sacred writers."<sup>20</sup>

The second great principle of Unitarianism is: ". . . we ought to offer prayer and adoration to God, the Father, only."<sup>21</sup> In enunciating this principle, Yates accuses Trinitarianism of tri-Theism<sup>22</sup> and later equates it with

Polytheism.<sup>23</sup> Unitarians "honour (Jesus) more than every other creature"<sup>24</sup> but do so "by worshipping in spirit and in truth that being whom he also worshipped. . ."<sup>25</sup>

The third principle is: ". . . we regard holiness of heart and excellence of conduct, as the only means of obtaining salvation."<sup>26</sup> He attacks the Orthodox theory of the Atonement but denies that Unitarians believe "that our imperfect deeds of benevolence and piety entitle us to the rewards of heaven,"<sup>27</sup> quoting with approval Paul's statement -- 'By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.' He later states, however, that "The Bible indeed plainly teaches that God will reward every man according to his works and not according to his faith"<sup>28</sup> (*italics are Yates'*) -- and ". . . every individual of the human race, according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil, will be rewarded with abundant and everlasting happiness, or doomed to severe and long-enduring chastisement."<sup>29</sup>

The Sermon closes with assurances that Unitarianism is the only hope for the conversion of Jews, Mohammedans, and Heathens, for all of whom the Trinitarian doctrine is a stumbling-block. The final paragraphs present a glorious picture of the inevitable progress of the world to peace and benevolence when Unitarian doctrine is supreme.<sup>30</sup>

More than the positive statements of Unitarian doctrine,<sup>31</sup> it was the attack upon orthodox Christianity in the sermon

which undoubtedly aroused Wardlaw and others.

Trinitarianism is pictured as depending for its power on a grounding upon early prejudice.<sup>32</sup> Orthodox Christianity renounces reason completely, and maintains its authority over men by dependence upon religious establishments which deny freedom to opposing religious groups.<sup>33</sup> Trinitarian worship is idolatry.<sup>34</sup> The doctrine of the Atonement is "inconsistent, not only with reason and with itself, but with the plainest lessons of the Scriptures. . .<sup>35</sup> and tends "to overwhelm the mind with superstitious dread and melancholy, and to destroy the placid confidence of true devotion."<sup>36</sup> Here were "deliberate misrepresentations" which Wardlaw / felt compelled to refute as he set forth in his own Discourses the true Trinitarian doctrine.

#### The Discourses on the Socinian Controversy

Wardlaw composed his discourses with a view to vindicating the "Supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ" by an appeal to Scriptures. He confined himself "entirely to the Scriptures"<sup>37</sup> and attempted to expound[upon] the leading Scriptural texts which support this doctrine. He renounces the labor of "(wading) through the multifarious opinions of antiquity" as unnecessary because the Bible is quite clear and explicit on these matters.<sup>38</sup> Thus is set the pattern for the ensuing stages of the controversy. It becomes a battle of texts, though Yates later introduces a good deal of Patristic thought and writing in support of his views.

A review of Wardlaw's arguments as contained in the Discourses can, however, be given without accompanying reference to his Biblical support, for that will be dealt with in the consideration of Yates's "Vindication" and Wardlaw's "Reply."

The argument then is as follows:

The test of truth in matters of religion must be revelation. "Reason. . . is not the test itself: -- it is only the instrument by which we ascertain the test and by which we apply it to use."<sup>39</sup> The Scriptures are wholly inspired: . . . "all which they contain is truth."<sup>40</sup> They are the test by which all things are to be proved.<sup>41</sup> We must guard against seeking to have the Scriptures mean what we should like them to mean and we cannot indulge a secret desire to find any part of them spurious.<sup>42</sup> We must rather receive whatever the Bible says. The Bible should be regarded as a whole. We should beware of forming judgments from detached and isolated passages and should use the Scriptures as "self-expositors."<sup>43</sup>

The Unity of the Godhead is affirmed, throughout the Bible, in such a manner that the plurality of persons in the Godhead is asserted with equal force.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, plurality is always declared to be consistent with unity, though in such a way that we cannot with our limited understanding form exact impressions of the nature of this reality. It remains a mystery.<sup>45</sup>

Concerning the divinity of Christ, "the simple and only question. . . is not whether Jesus Christ was man but whether he was not also God."<sup>46</sup> Of the latter question, there can be one and only one answer if the testimony of the Bible is to be given any credence. The names and titles given to Him, the divine attributes ascribed to Him, the works done by Him, the worship accorded to Him: all affirm His full divinity, without denying his manhood. Since both the manhood and the divinity of Jesus Christ are affirmed in Scripture, orthodox Christian doctrine is doubly supported for --

"of two contending systems, that one ought to be preferred which not only affords a natural explanation of those texts by which it seems to be itself supported, but, at the same time, furnishes a satisfactory principle of harmony between these, and those other passages which have the appearance of countenancing its opposite."<sup>47</sup>

Faith in Jesus Christ the God-Man, obviously supplies this "satisfactory principle of harmony."

The atoning sacrifice of Christ must be regarded in the following light:

- "1. It is in consideration of the Sacrifice of Christ that God is propitious to sinners.
2. In pardoning the guilty on this ground, God displays his righteousness.
3. The ground on which the pardon of sin is bestowed has been, in every age, and under every dispensation, the same.
4. An interest in the pardoning mercy of God through Jesus Christ is obtained by faith.
5. In resting our hope of forgiveness on the atoning sacrifice of Christ, we build on a sure foundation."<sup>48</sup>



"Justification by free grace, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, I apprehend to be the very first principle of the gospel."<sup>49</sup>

The Holy Spirit is not an attribute, or power, or influence or mode of divine operation. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. His influences are of two varieties: common and extraordinary.<sup>50</sup> The most important ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit are "the spiritual illumination of the understanding in order to the conversion of the heart"<sup>51</sup> and "maintaining the inward peace and comfort and joy of believers in Christ."<sup>52</sup>

The Christian must be a disciple of Christ and a believer in his doctrine, a lover of Christ, an obedient subject and imitator of Christ, an expectant of Christ, i.e. -- one who looks for the second coming.

#### The Area of Agreement

Yates's "Vindication. . ." and Wardlaw's "Reply. . ." must be considered together in reference to the first and positive statement of his position by Wardlaw, as reviewed above. It is important to observe, at the outset, that discussion was possible for these two protagonists of differing doctrinal systems because of the area of agreement which they shared. Wardlaw assumes "plenary inspiration of the Sacred Volume."<sup>53</sup> Yates announces that despite the fact that the question "whether the Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures be a Doctrine of the Christian Religion, is one



of those questions upon which Unitarians are divided in opinion,"<sup>54</sup> he himself will conduct his arguments "so as to make them agreeable to the highest supposition ever advanced, viz. that not only every sentiment but every word was dictated to the sacred penmen by the immediate suggestion of God."<sup>55</sup> It was, indeed, this agreement upon the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures which rendered the ensuing debate so intense and acrimonious, for admittedly the proof in the matter depended upon "what Scripture saith." But what does Scripture say -- and what does it mean?

There was a certain amount of agreement between the two regarding the proper spheres of Reason and Revelation. Wardlaw gave to Reason the right to determine "whether the Scriptures be a revelation from God" and when this has been determined, to determine "the true meaning of the various parts of this revelation."<sup>56</sup> Yates was both more general and more systematic in his statement:

"The use of Reason in matters of religion is threefold: first, to derive from the appearances of nature the proofs of the Existence, the Attributes, the Providence, and the Moral Government of God; secondly, to establish the Truth, Excellence, and Divine Origin of the Jewish and Christian Religions; and thirdly, to determine the sense of the Sacred Scriptures."<sup>57</sup>

Wardlaw certainly had reservations regarding the correctness of Reason's exercise of power in the first sphere mentioned by Yates for though he would hardly deny the existence of Natural Religion, he would deny that reason could "derive

from the appearance of Nature" the Providence of God. He would reject Yates's second point if it were interpreted as meaning that reason should be the actual test of the truth, excellence and divine origin of the Christian religion. For revelation is the test, though reason can be used to gain knowledge of that which is revealed. Yates assigns to Revelation the task of delivering "doctrines and precepts, highly conducive to the virtue and happiness of mankind, but which unless proceeding immediately from God, would be either unknown or little regarded."<sup>58</sup> This is a severely guarded and strictly minimal statement with which Wardlaw could agree only as representing a first step toward a full definition of revelation.

Therefore, even the agreement regarding the plenary inspiration of the scriptures (and we cannot be certain that Yates was championing the view that was really his own) held little hope for the discovery of any further areas of agreement. It appears to the reader that Yates was saying only that the Scriptures are inspired by God, while Wardlaw was making the further claim that these inspired writings contain the full revelation of God, no portion of which may be set aside or disregarded. The question was not so much one of inspiration as of authority, and there are clear indications that the final authority for Yates was human reason. It is not easy to define Wardlaw's opposition at this point, though its nature becomes much clearer as

specific Biblical texts are debated. He claims that reason is not itself the test of truth but only the instrument by which we ascertain and apply the test, which is revelation. How we are to be sure that we are making a right use of reason he does not say, though he gives ample evidence that he believes reason to be thoroughly corrupted and therefore, presumably, an unreliable agency.<sup>59</sup>

### The Battle of the Texts

The major arguments in Wardlaw's Discourses were supported by an impressive number of proof-texts. Yates, following an enunciation of Unitarian doctrine, opens a sharp attack on these passages, which he claims are the usual Scriptural texts marshalled in support of the Trinitarian position. Some of the basis for his attack was established in his chapter "On the Proper Method of Ascertaining the Sense of Scripture."<sup>60</sup> In this chapter, he states,

"Whenever we wish to determine with racy the sense of any portion of the New ament, (for to the New I shall chiefly / my remarks) three particulars claim attention: 1st, the correctness of the < text; 2dly, the mode of translating it English; and 3dly, the mode of inter- ling that translation."<sup>61</sup>

Yates takes as his standard Greek text that of Griesbach, late Professor of Theology in the University of Jena. Since Griesbach's text had been cited by Wardlaw as "the

most recent. . . and the most perfect," it becomes the court of appeal for both men in their debate. On the matter of English translations of the original text, Yates cautions against "servile deference to the opinions of others"<sup>62</sup> but urges that when there are two possible translations, the student make his choice after "he has learned the doctrine from other unambiguous passages."<sup>63</sup>

In the following section, we shall analyze the discussion by the two men of certain major texts employed originally by Wardlaw in support of the Trinitarian doctrines which he presents in his Discourses. Wardlaw's argument has been outlined. Excluding the discussion of reason and revelation (which for both men assumed the form of an introduction to their system and not an integral part of the matter under debate) the "Discourses" can be divided into four sections. One presents the proofs for the Unity of the Godhead and the Plurality of Persons within the Godhead. A second section presents the proofs for the divinity of Christ. A third takes up the Doctrine of the Atonement. A fourth presents the evidence for belief in the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person. As has been indicated, the Doctrine of the Atonement does not become a subject of major debate, though it is evident that Yates rejects in its entirety this doctrine as presented by Wardlaw. It is therefore possible, with complete justice to the views of the antagonists, to present their discussion under three headings: God, the

Divinity of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Since the real debate is on the Trinity, it is not only possible but sensible so to narrow the field and eliminate some of the discussion of other matters which were not too important. It must be confessed that some of the discussion of this profound question of the nature of the Christian God seems to be conducted on rather minute and trivial grounds of difference, but the great issue is there and its significance emerges clearly in some of the discussion.

#### The Unity of the Godhead and the Plurality of Persons

In his Discourse "On the Unity of God," Wardlaw cites as an evidence for plurality of persons within the Godhead, the text: "Behold the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil." Yates takes the position, in refutation, that the expression "one of us," while evidently referring to more persons than one, does not signify plurality of persons in the Godhead but refers rather to the fact that Adam, in possessing the knowledge of good and evil, has become like "intelligent beings, inferior to the Supreme Deity, who resemble man in the capacity of distinguishing between good and evil."<sup>64</sup> That there are such beings and that it is they to whom reference is made, he supports by pointing to the 5th verse of the same chapter: "In the day ye shall eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (or angels) knowing good and evil."

*Elaboration  
- Review  
Council*



In his "Reply. . ." Wardlaw seizes upon this interpretation with particular enthusiasm and succeeds in turning its force upon its user. He points out, first of all, the importance of Yates's admission that the words do imply the idea of plurality and cannot be understood (as in other cases the use of "we" is interpreted by Yates) as the language of majesty used by one person. He then queries whether God would speak to his angels "in terms of familiarity, as if he were only primus inter pares."<sup>65</sup> Finally, Yates has quoted only a portion of the text (Gen. 3:5) by which he supports his contention that it is angels who are referred to in verse 22. That text reads "The serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof then shall your eyes be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Why, he asks, should the same word be rendered "in the singular number and in its supreme sense in the former part of the verse and in the plural number, and inferior sense, in the latter?"<sup>66</sup> The true translation of the Devil's words, Wardlaw claims to be -- "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil."<sup>67</sup> This, he says, "gives the temptation all its force, and all its malignity; and at the same time preserves the same word (and a leading word too) from shifting its meaning in the same short sentence. . ."<sup>68</sup> If this be a true translation,<sup>69</sup> added weight is given by it to the 22nd verse as an evidence



for Plurality of Persons. In both cases, possessing knowledge of good and evil is to become like God. And it is God who speaks in the words, "one of us" -- referring to none but himself.

Of course, the sufficient answer to all this may have been given by Yates when he remarked that "Calvin himself denies that the plural termination is any evidence of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. That celebrated man had too much learning and too much sense to build his system upon such a sandy foundation."<sup>70</sup> But Wardlaw had an answer for that too, when he points out that Calvin in the Institutes, Chapter 13, Section 24 had this to say:

"I am aware that our inferring a distinction of persons from the words of Moses, when he introduces God as saying, 'Let us make man in our own image' has been a matter of mockery to many scoffers. The pious reader, however, will be sensible how tamely and inappropriately this would be introduced by Moses in the form of conversation, unless there subsisted a plurality of persons in the one God."<sup>71</sup>

Yates maintains that Wardlaw can produce only seven texts from the entire Old and New Testaments which assert in terms more or less direct and explicit that 'in the unity of the Godhead there are three distinct subsistences or persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.'<sup>72</sup> Wardlaw replies that he had already asserted in his first Discourse that

"the argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity is not, by any means, completed when those passages of Scripture have been adduced in which that doctrine is asserted or implied in its full extent; in which, that is, all, the three

persons of the Godhead are introduced together. The proofs of the divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, form distinct portions of the same body of evidence; all bearing directly on the same great general truth."<sup>73</sup>

Yates has quoted this and stated his agreement. Nevertheless, Wardlaw must be willing to defend particularly those texts which he has cited as directly asserting the Trinity and we select one for example. It is the one which Yates seizes as "the passage upon which Mr. Wardlaw lays the greatest stress as a clear and decisive proof of the Trinitarian doctrine."<sup>74</sup> The text is, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Wardlaw had used this sentence in support of both the unity of God and the Plurality of Persons in the Godhead<sup>75</sup> and the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit.<sup>76</sup> In the latter place he states,

"That the initiatory ordinance of baptism, prescribed in these words, involves in it an act of solemn worship, an invocation of the thrice-holy Name in which it is administered, is beyond all dispute. Now how (as was remarked in the first of this series of Discourses) can we imagine anything more fitted to mislead, than the supposition that 'the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' means, the name of the only true God, and of one of his human creatures, and of an attribute, or power, or influence, or mode of operation? On the Trinitarian hypothesis, the form is natural and proper. On that of its adversaries, it appears to be utterly irreconcilable with right notions and becoming impressions of the peculiar honour due to Him who 'will not give his glory to another.'"<sup>77</sup>

Yates chooses to make an oblique attack -- opposing the assumption that the Baptismal formula intends to make Father, Son, and Holy Spirit objects of worship. The Unitarian belief is that they are subjects of faith.<sup>78</sup> After marshalling a number of illustrations in support of his position<sup>79</sup> he says, "It appears, therefore, that to be baptized into a person or thing, or into the name of a person or thing, was to avow faith in that person or thing, and not to make it the object of worship. We are thus enabled to determine the true sense of the text in question, which is, "Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them as a testimony of their belief in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."<sup>80</sup> Then --

"What trace do (these words) contain of the doctrine of three persons in one God? We Unitarians, believe in the Father, who is the only true God, and who gave a revelation of his will to his creatures: we believe in the Son, the messenger of the Father's grace, the bearer of these glorious tidings: we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Divine power or influence, by which Jesus Christ and the Apostles were enabled to work miracles to confirm the truth of the doctrines, which they taught."<sup>81</sup>

Wardlaw, in his rebuttal, concedes that his language "in affirming that this passage necessarily implies an act of worship, was too strong and unqualified. . . I am satisfied that this arises, in a considerable degree, from my views of the nature of the ordinance of baptism, along with my previous conviction of the doctrine of the Trinity."<sup>82</sup> This was a daring admission since Yates had repeatedly alleged that

Trinitarians read their Bibles to find in them what they already believe on authority and often by prejudice.

The crucial question, says Wardlaw however, is not whether faith or worship be implied, but the nature of its objects.

Is the Holy Spirit simply an influence or power, or is the Holy Spirit a Person? He then makes use of Yates's statement that "everyone who has accurately observed the phraseology of the Scriptures, knows that 'the name' of a person is an expression often used to signify the person himself."<sup>83</sup>

Though the marks of emphasis are those given<sup>16</sup> the concluding words by Yates himself, they serve equally well to underline the contention of Wardlaw that the Holy Spirit, like God and Christ, is a person: one of the three Divine Persons of the Godhead. It would appear that Yates had, as Wardlaw claimed, directed his attack against a part of the argument which, when yielded, opened a way to the proof rather than the refutation of the main contention. If to be baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," is to be baptized into a belief in, rather than a worship of the Triune God, the very argument which establishes this fact establishes also the Trinity.

On this point, Calvin states,

"...if we are initiated by baptism into the faith and religion of one God, we must necessarily suppose him to be the true God into whose name we are baptised. Nor can it be doubted, but that in this solemn commission, 'Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,' Christ intended

to testify, that the perfect light of faith was now exhibited. For this is equivalent to being baptised into the name of the one God, who hath clearly manifested himself in the Father, Son, and Spirit: whence it evidently appears that in the Divine Essence there exist three Persons, in whom is known the one God."<sup>84</sup>

Yates had made it clear in his sermon in 1812 that he would attack Trinitarianism as being, actually, polytheism. It is necessary therefore for Wardlaw to affirm again and again his belief in the unity of God and it is part of the strength of both his Discourses and his Reply that he insists that his Unitarian opponent must prove "the inconsistency of this unity with the personal distinction for which Trinitarians contend; or in other words, that this doctrine of personal distinction has no place in the word of God."<sup>85</sup> Thus also he is able to dispose of a great portion of his opponent's argument, for, as he points out, "Instances of the Father being an appellation of the Supreme Divinity can never be proofs that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not essentially included in the Divinity so denominated."<sup>86</sup> It is part of the nature of the Trinitarian argument that it is cumulative; all testimony for the Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit is proof of the plurality of persons in the Godhead. To this testimony, or to relevant portions of it, we may now pass with the assumption that more significant divergences of view will be revealed and more profound evidences of doctrine presented.



## The Divinity of Jesus Christ

Wardlaw uses as his text for the four discourses  
on the Supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ, I John 5:20:

"We know that the Son of God is come,  
and hath given us an understanding, that we  
may know Him that is true, and we are in Him  
that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.  
This is the true God, and eternal life."

By prefixing his discourses on this subject with the entire last sentence and the four last words of the preceding sentence, he emphasizes his contention that the words, "This is the true God. . ." refer to the "Son Jesus Christ." His examination of the text in the first of the Discourses includes a review of the "general rule, that the personal, or the demonstrative pronoun, should be considered as referring to the immediate antecedent" except "when obvious and indisputable necessity requires the contrary" and "when the immediate antecedent holds no prominent place in the sentence, but is introduced only incidentally, the remote being obviously the chief subject. . ."87 In regard to this text, only a prior assumption of the certainty that Jesus Christ is not the true God could justify the application of the first exception. The second could not apply here as the son of God "stands first and last in the part of the verse which precedes our text."88

A further support for Wardlaw's position is drawn from the fact that "true God" and "eternal life" are coupled in the text. He points out that the expression, "Eternal Life" is



one often used to describe Jesus Christ, and is so used in the epistle here under consideration. Finally, he quotes Watts' "Christian Doctrine of the Trinity"<sup>89</sup> which points out that the concluding sentence of the epistle conveys a stern warning against idolatry. The Apostle John would obviously not leave a sentence so certain to be interpreted as meaning that Jesus Christ is God, if that were not his own belief. If Jesus Christ be not the true God, then the Apostle himself is tempting his readers to the very sin which he warns against.

Yates here has a three-fold argument to confound. He attacks first the assumption that in this case the pronoun does refer to the immediate antecedent. As an instance of the application of the exception, he quotes the 7th verse of the 2nd Epistle of John: "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist." Obviously the pronoun, "this" refers not to the immediate antecedent "Christ" but to the more remote antecedent, "deceivers."<sup>90</sup> Mr. Yates argues<sup>91</sup> that it is equally absurd to assume that in 1st John 5:20, "this" refers to "Jesus Christ" rather than to "Him that is true." As Wardlaw points out in his "Reply. . . ." this argument introduces by inference the assumption that evidence for the belief that Jesus Christ is God is so scarce in Scriptures as to make this assumption equivalent to the one that Jesus Christ is a deceiver and antichrist, as deduced

from the Scriptural evidence therefor.<sup>92</sup>

To the second argument of Wardlaw -- that Jesus Christ is referred to as "Eternal Life" in many places and particularly at the opening of this Epistle, and is therefore certainly meant to be designated in this verse -- Yates replies that this term means only that Christ is the "promiser of eternal life," but that the gift itself comes from God through Christ who, though he may be called "Eternal Life" is that "in an inferior sense."<sup>93</sup> This hardly disposes of the main point of Wardlaw: namely, that it is Christ who is here designated as "the true God and eternal life." Yates does not refer to the use of the term at the opening of the Epistle, probably because Socinians in their Improved Version of the New Testament had stated that the term did refer to Christ when used in that verse.

The third argument of Wardlaw's is met by Yates with words of reproof:

"If we study the Scriptures with true humility and piety, we shall never ask, What occasion is there for this or that? or encourage ourselves to suppose that one observation may be misplaced, a second trivial, and a third unnecessary."<sup>94</sup>

There is no need for such a warning here, however, for the "propriety and force" of the Apostle's remark is obvious. He is not satisfied with mentioning the Supreme Being once or twice under the august title of "Him that is true" but he repeats, "The being of whom I speak is the True God and the giver of eternal life," as a solemn admonition to adhere

to his worship, to obey his will, and to seek his favour. Thus he naturally introduces the affectionate exhortation, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."<sup>95</sup>

The attempts of Yates to lessen the effect of Wardlaw's interpretation of this seem very weak. Indeed, 7 the only way in which Yates's interpretation of the meaning of the verse might receive a decisive advantage in the mind of the reader would be upon the assumption of the correctness of his total position: that nowhere in the New Testament is there a shred of evidence for Trinitarian belief. If that were believed, for instance, it would be possible to believe also that Jesus Christ might as easily be described as deceiver and antichrist as to be described as God. In a way, this indicates the tendency of this debate in which so many scores of texts are produced. No one text can be decisive and neither can all of them put together. For each single text, though closely examined on its own terms (and how closely, the perusal of a few pages of these volumes would indicate) will in the end be placed in relationship to others which form part of the general pattern of proof.

I cannot well disguise my own conviction that the total impact of Wardlaw's argument is far more impressive than that of Yates. Yet the desire, apparently felt equally by both writers, to win their battle on each text as well as on the whole message of the Bible leaves one somewhat

doubtful and exceedingly weary. This, however, was their method and the least one can do is to honor it by respectful attention and express his gratitude for the thorough way in which the method is applied and for the illumination of certain texts thereby. I think it unfair to apply to these writers of a century and a half ago the criteria which the intervening years of textual criticism have provided. Granting their agreed upon basis -- that the Scriptures are wholly inspired -- I find rather impressive their earnest effort to discover the exact meaning of each text. "Search the Scriptures" was a motto which had in it far more than polemical import, for the Unitarian Yates and the Trinitarian Wardlaw are alike convinced that lives of power and purpose can be lived by no other guide than that provided in these pages. However, an obvious fallacy in the effort to prove doctrine by appeal to Scriptures is that part of one's doctrine concerns the interpretation of Scriptures. It is this portion of doctrine which cannot be tested by the contents of the Bible, since it is, in some sense at least, on a priori. Both Wardlaw and Yates had a definite belief concerning the interpretation of the Bible, but they were unable or unwilling to state it in unambiguous language. One concludes, after reading the "Vindication" and the "Reply," that this failure on both sides to deal honestly and conclusively with the problem of the interpretation of Scriptures is the result of a faulty theory

of the relationship of faith and reason, of revelation and the means of verification, of revealed truth.

It is in the discussion of the Holy Spirit that the appeal to Scriptures becomes most confusing. Here it is possible to see that neither of the men had an adequate understanding of the "testimony of the Holy Spirit" as the means by which revelation is both confirmed and renewed. It will be observed later that Wardlaw, in concentrating on the attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit is a "Person," is not convincing. Had he, in his section on the test of truth in matters of religion, placed more stress upon the role of the Holy Spirit as the bearer of truth, he would have strengthened his entire Trinitarian argument and prepared the way for a more natural presentation of the third person of the Trinity. ✓

### The Holy Spirit

Wardlaw, in presenting the evidence for the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person, felt it necessary to prove, first of all, that the Holy Spirit is a Person and not an attribute, influence, or power; and secondly, that this Person is Divine. He used the same method in proving both points: the method of demonstrating that the properties and acts which we know to be those characterizing a person are ascribed to the Holy Spirit: and proving that those attributes and powers which we denote as divine are also ascribed to this Person of the Trinity -- the Holy Spirit.



As an example of the first proof, the following, brief portion of the Discourse is illuminating:

"Acts xv. 28. 'For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no other burden than these necessary things.' In these words, the Holy Spirit must mean, either a person, or that Divine influence which was imparted to them, and 'opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.' To speak of any thing seeming good to that influence itself, is a great deal more than unnatural: -- it is nonsense. The influence was only the indication of the good pleasure of him whose influence it was. His gifts were the intimation of his will: -- and it was in this view that the apostles considered them, when, inferring the mind of the Spirit from the interposition of his miraculous energy, they said, 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost.'"96

As one of the attributes of divinity ascribed to the Holy Spirit, Wardlaw refers to that of Eternal Existence "ascribed by the apostle Paul, in express terms, to the Holy Spirit."<sup>97</sup> "How much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"<sup>98</sup>

Yates does not offer direct refutation of Wardlaw's proofs that the Holy Spirit is a Person and that he is Divine, preferring to point out that it is necessary for Trinitarians to prove "not only that the Holy Spirit is a person, and that he is possessed of Divine attributes, but also that he is a different being from God the Father."<sup>99</sup> He refers to the text from Hebrews (ix. 14) and admits that the word "eternal" in this passage, as it is used



describing the Spirit, "is a difficulty." He prefers to follow Griesbach in questioning the genuineness of the word 'eternal' in the text.<sup>100</sup> But "even if the common reading were indisputably correct, the passage would afford no proof of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, who, if he be the Supreme God, could not have been employed as the instrument, by whose aid Christ was enabled to undergo the pains of death."<sup>101</sup>

At no point in the discussion between Wardlaw and Yates does the former's argument seem less convincing and relevant than in this consideration of the Holy Spirit. In presenting his proofs for the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit, Wardlaw seems aware that he may easily go beyond the limits of that which he is seeking to prove: distinction of Persons in unity of Substance. Yates is no doubt equally aware of the vulnerability of his position. For in claiming that the Holy Spirit is an influence or an instrument of God, he must make use of substantially the same evidence employed by Trinitarians to prove that God and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons and yet one and the same. By holding firmly to both aspects of the truth -- that God is One and that He is a Trinity -- Wardlaw is able to defend his position by appeal to texts which affirm seemingly contradictory truths. He has enunciated a principle in this regard which is to prove useful in later controversies on the atonement: ". . . of two contending systems, that one ought to be preferred which not only affords a natural explanation of

those texts by which it seems to be itself supported, but at the same time, furnished a satisfactory principle of <sup>? s/</sup> harmony between these, and those other passages which have the appearance of countenancing its opposite."<sup>102</sup>

This principle is extremely useful in many cases, but it does not appear to be of much value in the discussion of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus is referred to in Scripture as a man, -- subordinate to God, a created being -- and also as God, the principle which harmonizes these passages is apparent and excellent. Christ Jesus is the God-man. But the Holy Spirit cannot be considered as both a Person and an influence or agency. Yet, when Wardlaw proves as he does, that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, it is difficult to see how he avoids his opponent's accusation of tri-theism. ✓ For he attributes to the Holy Spirit, will, understanding and consciousness.<sup>103</sup> He is "an intelligent agent,"<sup>104</sup> a "conscious and active subsistence."<sup>105</sup> He possesses all the divine attributes; in fact, the description of the Holy Spirit is identical <sup>with</sup> to that which is given of God.

Yates of course seizes upon these statements and attempts to link Wardlaw with Dr. William Sherlock of the Church of England who said,

"When we prove the Holy Ghost to be a Person, against the Socinians who make him only a Divine Power, we prove that all the Properties of a Person belong to him, such as understanding, Will, Affection and Action; which shows what our notion of a Person is, such a Being as has Understanding and Will, and Power of Action, and it would be very

strange, that we should own Three Persons, each of which Persons is truly and properly God, and not own three infinite minds; as if anything could be a God but an infinite mind."106

Wardlaw refuses this identification with Sherlock, for though he admits that he speaks of three Persons in the Godhead, distinct from each other, he has consistently "disavowed all pretension to understanding the nature of the distinction."107 He has defined what he means by a Person (that which possesses personal properties)108 and has shown that "in the Scriptures, properties confessedly of this nature are ascribed to the Holy Spirit."109

"But does this imply my understanding, or pretending to understand, how the Holy Spirit subsists in personal distinction from the Father and the Son? -- in what manner personal properties are possessed and exercised by each? -- which is the same thing as, what the nature of the distinction is?"110

In the foregoing statement, Wardlaw is referring to his attempt, at the beginning of the Discourses, to avoid any appearance of explaining a mystery:

"The truth is, we are lost, completely lost, wherever we begin in any view of it whatever, to think about the Divine essence. We can form no more distinct conception of a Being that is everywhere present, and yet is really nowhere, than we can of one essence in which there are, and have been from eternity, three distinct subsistences."111

He quotes with approval Dean Swift's words on the Trinity:

" . . . I shall again repeat the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is positively affirmed in Scripture: that God is there expressed in three different names, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost; that each of these is God, and that there is but one God. But this union and distinction are a mystery utterly unknown to mankind."<sup>112</sup>

It must be admitted however that Wardlaw, for all his efforts, has placed himself in a position of self-contradiction. He affirms<sup>113</sup> that "personal properties (are) ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit in such a way as to indicate a distinction in the unity of the Godhead." He claims not to know the nature of the distinction between the divine Persons. Yet it is on the very basis of the possession of "properties confessedly personal" that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are known to "subsist in personal distinction." This, then, is the nature of the distinction between them. They are distinct because they are Persons; they are Persons because they are distinct.

The difficulty here would seem to reside in the understanding of the meaning of "Persons." Wardlaw would agree with Moberly when he says, "The personal distinctions in Godhead are distinctions within, and of, unity; not a distinction which qualifies unity, or usurps the place of it, or destroys it."<sup>114</sup> Wardlaw needed a conception of "persona" which would enable him to express his views without seeming to fall into Tri-Theism on the one hand or Sabellianism on the other. This conception he might have found in the original Latin use of the word: "to devote bare rank or status such as

that of the citizen in comparison with the slave."<sup>115</sup>

Bethune-Baker says "It is always a person looked at from some distinctive point of view, a person in particular; that is, it conveys the notion much more of the environment than of the subject."<sup>116</sup> Wardlaw's efforts to make the Holy Spirit a Person in the latter sense of "subject" seem to me unconvincing. The exigencies of argument produced a concept which could not stand in harmonious relationship to the rest of his doctrine.

It can be said in his defence that it was difficult even for Calvin to avoid the difficulties inherent in the use of the word, Persons. In Chapter XIII, Par's 2-5 of the Institutes (Part I), Calvin wrestles with the words that have been used to express the truth that God "while he declares himself to be but One, . . . proposes himself to be distinctly considered in Three Persons."<sup>117</sup> He proves "that the Church was absolutely necessitated to use the terms Trinity and Persons,"<sup>118</sup> but warns that in the battle against Arius and Sabellius we must be careful not to go beyond what the Scriptures say. "Say 'that in one essence of God there is a trinity of Persons' and you will at once express what the Scriptures declare. . . ."<sup>119</sup>

Calvin, in Par. 18, goes on to say

" . . . to the Father is attributed the principle of action, the fountain and source of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel and the arrangement of all operations, and the power and efficacy of the action is assigned to the Spirit. . . . For



the mind of every man naturally inclines to the consideration, first, of God, secondly, of the wisdom emanating from him; and, lastly, of the power by which he executes the decrees of his wisdom. For this reason the Son is said to be from the Father, and the Spirit from both the Father and the Son. . . "120

At the very close of the Chapter (XIII), however, he denies the theory of continual generation: ". . . it is foolish to imagine a continual act of generation since it is evident that three Persons have subsisted in God from all eternity."121

Wardlaw says

". . . I entertain strong doubts about the correctness of the notion, commonly received, of what is called the eternal procession of the ~~Son~~ *Spirit* from the Father and the Son, in the essence of Deity. . . All that we are taught (in the Scriptures) on the subject of procession appears to be, -- that while the three persons have existed from eternity, equal, and mutually independent, in the Divine unity, in a manner which it is vain for us to attempt to comprehend; it has pleased this one Jehovah -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, -- in revealing to mankind the scheme of redeeming mercy, to inform us that, while each acts his part voluntarily. . . yet the Son is to be considered as sent by the Father and the Spirit as sent by the Father and the Son: -- the Father representing the Godhead, in the constitution of the plan, as it has been disclosed to us."122

### The Irreconcilable Difference

On the main issue between the Socinian and himself, Wardlaw thinks and speaks with unwavering conviction. Unitarianism and Trinitarianism are two utterly separate and opposed doctrines:

"It is silly, indeed, to speak of Unitarianism with the addition of Trinitarian



errors; as if, in their substrata, in their fundamental articles, the two systems were the same, and the propagation of Trinitarianism were only the propagation of Unitarianism with the accompaniment of certain erroneous additions. . . ."123

The great themes of Christian preaching are

"the depravity, guilt and condemnation of mankind, the deity and atonement of the Saviour, justification by grace through faith in his merits and sacrifice, and the enlightening and sanctifying agency of the Divine Spirit. . . ."124

These are not, and have never been the themes of Socinians. For theirs is not a Saviour who is "God with us;" their God is not in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The great question is not a theoretical one: how can one God subsist in three Persons? The question is, rather, how shall sinful, lost man be saved? Trinitarian Christianity knows only the answer of its faith in a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, God incarnate, and who dwells in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit.

However involved and inconclusive may be the argument over certain texts, the irreconcilable difference between the two systems is clearly revealed whenever this central issue of salvation is touched upon. Unfortunately, it is not touched upon often enough. Yates' refusal to enter into a discussion of the atonement and justification leaves the great theme of Christian proclamation outside the area of debate. Careful study of the several volumes produced by Wardlaw, Yates, Brown and others in this controversy and the writings of Belsham for the Unitarians and Fuller for the Calvinists, leave one with the conviction that far too

much time was spent in the proof or disproof of the Trinity on the basis of qualities attributed in Scripture to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Far too little attention was given to the characteristic action of God, by which his nature and purpose is revealed. There is something disturbingly static about the God who is known -- either by Trinitarians or by Unitarians. That which renders so much of the argument tiresome is the suspicion that it does not greatly matter whether this God is as Trinitarians describe him or as he is described by Unitarians, for he can little affect our lives in either case. This suspicion could never arise were the debate centered upon the true and decisive question of salvation. ✓

#### The "Discourses" in America

The "Discourses on the Principal Points of the Socinian Controversy" did not go unnoticed in the United States. An edition was published there in 1815.<sup>125</sup> The American edition of 1500 copies was quickly sold out. There could have been no more popular controversial work, for the Congregational churches of New England were in the throes of the Unitarian controversy which split the denomination. There is one contemporary and one later account of the effects produced by the issuing of the book in America. Dr. Jedidiah Morse of Charlestown, in a letter to Wardlaw dated February 14, 1816, said,

"Never did a work arrive more seasonably. It found us just at the commencement of an open controversy on the very points of which you treat, and coming from abroad -- from one against whom no personal prejudices had been excited, and happily written in so good a spirit, it had the greater weight and more extensive influence. Very many have reason to thank God for the effects produced by it in establishing and confirming those who are sound in the faith, and in several instances (we know not in how many) convincing those who had embraced error."<sup>126</sup>

Dr. Leonard Woods of Andover, just four months before his death, wrote to Mr. Wardlaw's daughter concerning her late father's book,

". . . it was of great value in New England. It was published at a time when such a work was greatly needed. . . It was circulated and read extensively, and did much towards strengthening the decided friends of truth, enlightening and confirming the wavering, and checking the confidence and zeal of Unitarians."<sup>127</sup>

The Yale College degree of Doctor of Divinity, conferred upon Wardlaw, honoris causa, September 9, 1818, was largely a recognition of this service performed for the American church.<sup>128</sup>

The situation in American Congregationalism at this time is so interesting in its contrast to the Scottish Congregational movement that the influence exerted by Wardlaw deserves more than passing notice. The place where the American edition of the "Discourses" was published, and the names of the two correspondents,<sup>129</sup> provide a framework for the brief review of events in America, which is all that we can attempt within the scope of this study.

### Jedidiah Morse and the Battle Against Unitarianism

In the year of Wardlaw's birth, 1779, Jedidiah Morse began his studies at Yale College. It was a period referred to as "the Dark Age of American Christianity."<sup>130</sup> Yale was at a low ebb and the assertion was made that the only reason many of the students attended the college was to avoid being drafted. It was, in fact, necessary for Morse's father to appeal to Governor Trumbull for an "exemption from military duty, so that he was enabled to take his place in the college."<sup>131</sup> Morse continued theological studies under the tutelage of Jonathon Edwards, the younger, and was licensed to preach by the New Haven County Association, in 1785. He was elected tutor at Yale but his health was so frail that he soon was forced to give up the position. His classmate, Abiel Holmes, who had been pastor of a Congregational Church in Midway Georgia, had come to New England to escape the enervating influences of the Southern climate. The two friends agreed that they would exchange places, especially since Morse wished to tour the Southern states and prepare a new edition of his "Geography Made Easy"<sup>132</sup> which he had published in 1784. So Abiel Holmes, the father of Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Jedidiah Morse, the father of Samuel F. B. Morse, exchanged places and Morse spent a brief period in Georgia. He was settled in the First Church, Charlestown, Mass. in 1789. Here, in close proximity to the city of Boston, Morse found the Calvinism which he championed

with great conviction dangerously threatened.

Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, at this time wrote of Boston in his "Travels in New England:"

"An important change has. . . taken place in the religious opinions of Bostonians. Before this period moderate Calvinism very generally prevailed. At the present time Unitarianism appears to be the predominating system. It is believed that neither ministers nor people have had any reason to congratulate themselves on this change."<sup>133</sup>

This change in the religious opinions of Eastern Massachusetts had not taken place overnight. Jonathon Edwards in 1734 had preached his great sermons on "Justification by Faith" against the rise of Arminianism, represented in America by the evangelistic tours of Whitefield. By 1780, Universalism had gained many adherents in New England. King's Chapel in Boston became Unitarian in 1787.<sup>134</sup> French thought had exercised a profound influence on America because of the close association of Revolutionary leaders of the two countries. Thomas Jefferson was, if anything, a Unitarian and Benjamin Franklin was not confessedly a Christian at all but held views which were favorable to Unitarianism.

Morse welcomed the coming of his friend, Abiel Holmes, to the First Church in Cambridge, for Abiel was one who would do valiant battle for the Calvinist cause. But in 1791, he wrote that he stood "solitary among my brethren in the public defense of (the Trinity)."<sup>135</sup> He corresponded with Dr. John Erskine of Edinburgh and it was from him that he received information about an organized effort in Europe to overthrow



religion. (Letter of Erskine to Morse in January, 1797). It is interesting and somewhat amusing to discover that the main source of Erskine's information was Professor J. Robison whose work, "A Conspiracy against All the Governments and Religions in Europe" contained a particularly violent attack upon Robert Haldane. It was this volume as much as any other, that caused Haldane to publish his "Address to the Public" in 1800, for Robison had quoted Haldane as stating his readiness "to wade to the knees in blood for the purpose of overturning every establishment of religion."<sup>136</sup> Morse, not realizing that the book contained an attack upon the leader whose work was to culminate in the founding of the Congregational churches in Scotland, preached a memorable Fast Day Sermon on May 9, 1798, warning the people of the United States that there was a conspiracy by a secret association of Illuminati to overthrow their civil and religious institutions. Robison's book, was his evidence. He was unable, in the course of the controversy, to establish proof of his claim, just as Robison had been quite unable to sustain his accusation of Haldane.

Morse perceived, after this experience, that a more reliable method of uniting orthodox Christians must be discovered. He resolved upon two time-tried methods: the formation of ecclesiastical associations and the editing of periodicals. The former would strengthen the fellowship of ministers; the latter would stimulate the people. He first

tried to establish an association of Calvinist ministers by uniting Congregationalists in Massachusetts and Presbyterians in Connecticut. When this failed, he and his friends formed in July, 1802 at Northampton, the General Association of Congregational Ministers. In 1805,<sup>137</sup> the Panoplist was first published -- a magazine written to defend evangelical religion. In the publication of the Panoplist, Leonard Woods became associated with Jedidiah Morse.

#### Leonard Woods and the Founding of Andover Seminary

Leonard Woods was born in 1774 and graduated from Harvard in 1796. In 1797, he united with the church at Medford, Mass. and determined to devote his life to the ministry. In the Autumn of 1797, he went into the home of the Rev. Dr. Charles Backus at Somers, Conn. where he received his preparation for the ministry in one of the most noted household theological schools of the Edwardean type. Woods thus came under the influence of the Hopkinsian school.<sup>138</sup>

Woods settled at West Newbury in 1799 as Pastor of the Second Church. He induced his congregation to adopt a revised Confession of Faith in which Edwardean ideas are prominent (e.g.: the assertion of a general Atonement and the tacit denial of the imputation of Adam's sin to his descendents). Woods, however, was able, while considered a Hopkinsian, to retain warm friendships with men of "old Calvinist" sympathies. Morse was regarded as such and when

he asked Woods to join him in editing The Panoplist, he paid tribute not only to the young man's great ability but to his mediating position.

In October, 1801, the old Mayflower Church at Plymouth started the schism within Congregationalism by splitting on the Unitarian issue. The Liberals had begun the publishing of the Monthly Anthology in 1803 and Channing's pastorate in Boston had opened the same year. With the calling of Ware to the Hollis chair at Harvard, the defenders of Calvinist doctrine, Hopkinsians and Old Calvinists alike, knew that the battle lines were drawn and that the marshalling of their united forces was of immediate importance.

Eliphalet Pearson, principal of Phillips Academy in Andover from 1778 to 1786 and thereafter Professor of Hebrew at Harvard, resigned his Harvard Chair in 1806. He was convinced that the passing of Harvard to the Liberals demanded the establishment of a new theological school true to Calvinist views. He and his friends, Jedidiah Morse of Charlestown and Samuel Farrar of Andover, thought naturally of Andover as the place for the school. They persuaded the "Founders" of Andover Academy to provide the means for the undertaking, prepared a constitution and in June, 1807, received authorization from the Massachusetts Legislature for the holding of funds by the Trustees of Phillips Academy.

At the same time, Dr. Samuel Spring of Newburyport, an ardent Hopkinsian, was interesting three wealthy and

religiously inclined laymen in the establishment of a seminary at West Newbury with Woods as its instructor. These three gentlemen (none of whom were church members) decided to give thirty thousand dollars for the purpose. On the following day, late in 1806, Woods came to Morse's house to discuss an issue of The Panoplist and the two discovered what each, independently, had been doing. They saw the advantages of union and finally, after great labor and many near defeats, the union became an accomplished fact in May, 1808 and Andover Seminary was born. This was the first Theological Seminary in America and Leonard Woods, at the age of 34, became the first Abbott Professor of Theology.<sup>139</sup> The first year of the Seminary's history saw an attendance of thirty. Andover Seminary which was thus founded as a mainstay of Calvinism was attacked by Unitarians as "an institution which would have disgraced the bigotry of the Middle Ages."<sup>140</sup> ✓

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Congregationalism was still an established church in Massachusetts. By 1811, the practise of establishment was virtually ended and by 1833 it was completely abolished. During this period, the Trinitarian Congregationalists lost 86 churches to the Unitarians. After 1833, by court order, each party kept the churches which it controlled in that year, but previous to this the Unitarians had captured some of the most distinguished churches (e.g. -- the First Church in Boston).

Thus, during the years 1812-1815 when the Socinian Controversy was engaging the attention of Wardlaw in Glasgow, the Congregationalists in New England, and particularly in Massachusetts, were fighting a far more serious battle. That Wardlaw's views were helpful in this struggle is indicated not only by the previously cited letters but by an examination of Leonard Woods' published Lectures, delivered to the theological students. Page after page contains long quotations from Wardlaw's Discourses,<sup>141</sup> and the "Vindication. . ." by Yates is quoted at length as an example of the Unitarian doctrine which must be refuted.

The future ministers of Congregational churches in New England were armed for their fight for Calvinism, to no small extent, by a young Congregational minister in Glasgow, Scotland. This Scottish minister received the highest praise from Jedidiah Morse who, short years before, had allied himself enthusiastically with the attacker of Haldane -- without whom there would probably have been no Congregational Church in Glasgow for Wardlaw to serve. And a denomination which, in Scotland, prided itself on its refusal of all the benefits of Establishment was, in the United States, mourning that lessening of concern for true faith which permitted its disestablishment. There is one consistent factor in this most interesting network of associations. That is Calvinism, itself. How adequately Wardlaw represented Calvinism we shall consider more fully



later. But there can be no doubt that he stood for a view of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ which was clear in its origins and in its implications. Had this not been the case, had there been any doubt concerning his orthodoxy on these points, he would never have been welcomed as an ally and employed as an instructor by the champions of orthodoxy in New England.

## CHAPTER V

Church and State: The Voluntary Controversy  
and the Debate on Church Establishment

The relationship between Church and State was an almost constant subject of debate throughout the years of Wardlaw's ministry in Glasgow. The years 1830-1845 were perhaps more agitated by conflict over this issue than any other in Scotland's history. The history of the "Voluntary Controversy" has been reviewed often, and the story of the Disruption of 1843 and the events leading to it is an even more familiar one. The outstanding figure of these years is, of course, Thomas Chalmers. It was his voice that was heard not only in Scotland but throughout Britain and overseas, first as the champion of the Established Church and then as the critic of what he felt to be a corruption of the principle of Establishment through the improper assumption by the civil authorities of rights belonging to the Church. The overwhelming importance of the Disruption and the founding of the Free Church has a tendency to relegate to positions of minor interest those who, outside the Established Church, contended for a conception of the church which placed it in complete independence of state support. The "voluntaryists," of whom Wardlaw was a leader, were in fact a small minority of the Protestant population of Scotland. They were not charged with the same responsibility for the religious life

of the nation as were the leaders in the Established Church. Their criticism of the Established Churches of England and Scotland, though just, could easily appear to be irresponsible. They seemed often to be threatening the whole structure of religious life.

Whatever may have been the relative strength of character and influence of Chalmers and Wardlaw, this difference in their positions tended inevitably to give the major place in history to the former. Since the story of Chalmers and the Disruption has been told recently with such fullness by Professor Hugh Watt, it may be helpful here to concentrate on an earlier period during which Chalmers and Wardlaw were opposed as advocates of Establishment and Voluntaryism. In order to make the study of this debate intelligible, it is necessary to review briefly the origins of the Voluntary Controversy.

### The Voluntary Controversy

This particular phase of the continuing discussion of the rights of the civil magistrates in matters of religion opened in April, 1829 when Andrew Marshall, Minister of the United Associate Congregation in Kirkintilloch, preached a sermon in Greyfriars Church in Glasgow. He was preaching before "The Glasgow Association for Propagating the Gospel in Connexion with the United Secession Church," The "Advertisement" in the printed edition of the sermon explains that the author was led to publish his sermon because of his

conviction that the "Catholic Relief Bill," though it protected the Protestant Establishment in Ireland while making a few concessions to the "Papists," would not long restrain the latter in their attempt to gain power for themselves. The only effectual security against this is to be found, he believes, in the principles he advocates in his sermon, which is entitled, "Ecclesiastical Establishments Considered."

Marshall's principles are simple, clear and briefly stated:

"1. A religious establishment cannot be necessary for propagating the gospel or for maintaining it because there is no reference to any such thing among the institutions of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

2. A religious establishment cannot be necessary for propagating the gospel or for maintaining it because there is no trace of any such thing in the early history of the church.<sup>2</sup>

3. A religious establishment is at best a human device and considered as a human device, it is chargeable with impropriety.<sup>3</sup> The establishment of 'one form of Christianity'<sup>4</sup> propagates 'pride among some -- discontent among others -- animosity among all.'<sup>5</sup>

4. A religious establishment is at variance with justice, for it causes the state to treat some citizens with more favor than others.<sup>6</sup>

5. A religious establishment is impolitic.<sup>7</sup>

6. A religious establishment has a tendency to secularize the church of Christ -- to bring it into conformity with the kingdoms of this world -- giving it much the appearance, and what is worse, much of the spirit of a political institution.<sup>8</sup>

7. A religious establishment sets aside altogether a positive ordinance of the Saviour -- that ordinance in which he has appointed the members of the church to provide, by their free-will offerings, for the support of its institutions.<sup>9</sup>

8. The compulsory provision for the clergy makes a religious establishment be felt as a burden and goes far to counteract the good it might otherwise do.<sup>10</sup>

9. Religious establishments are inefficient.<sup>11</sup>

10. Religious establishments are unnecessary, as proved by the strength of religious life in the United States, where no church is established.<sup>12</sup>

Marshall devoted a good portion of the sermon to his picture of the dangerous possibilities inherent in the establishment of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland and pointed out that the sure protection against these dangers was the removal of any temptation of power by doing away with the whole idea of establishment. One of his most effective passages is devoted to a description of the true church (free from all external influence or control) in comparison with an established church. All the virtues lie with the free church. It was such a passage as this, rather than the ones in which the danger of Roman Catholic domination was discussed, that aroused the Church of Scotland leaders. They saw that this was not simply a criticism of certain evils in the system of establishment, but an attack upon the whole system. Marshall was stating the classic Congregational position, though he himself was not a member of that denomination, when he lashed out against a "scheme for uniting men of all classes and descriptions, religious and irreligious, converted'



and unconverted, in one outward profession. . ."<sup>13</sup>

The Sermon was reviewed in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor in August, 1829. Marshall answered the review in a long letter addressed to the Editor, Dr. Andrew Thomson, the minister of St. George's Church in Edinburgh. Soon the controversy was raging in earnest with violent pamphlets being issued by both sides. The advocates of the Voluntary position established "Voluntary Church Associations" in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The supporters of Establishment organized in the "Association for Promoting the Interests of the Church of Scotland." Two magazines, The Voluntary Church Magazine and The Church of Scotland Magazine were founded.

Wardlaw took no part in the early phases of the controversy. The doctors had warned him against further exertions, and it may well be that he was loathe to enter a fight in which passions were so engaged that no restraint was exhibited on either side. In a letter to Dr. Heugh, written October 2, 1832, he expressed himself as being in complete agreement with those who were meeting in the Voluntary Associations. He emphasized the importance of placing the argument on Scriptural grounds --

" . . . the mind of God is the surest expediency. . . and the simplest and most satisfactory way of answering the question, 'What is expedient?' is to seek the answer to another, 'What saith the Scripture?'"<sup>14</sup>

He affirmed the argument which was central for the "Voluntaryists:"

"that the only effectual way to put Christianity in her path to full and final triumph, is to return to the principles and means of propagation by which her career was begun and for so long a period triumphantly carried forward. . ."<sup>15</sup>

A few weeks later, he preached to his congregation a sermon on "Civil Establishments of Christianity tried by their Only Authoritative Test, the Word of God." The sermon was a long one, taking over two hours for its delivery, and was an exhaustive study of the Scriptural support for the Voluntary position and the corresponding lack of support for the Establishment. It was on this basis that Wardlaw sought always to place the argument. What was right must be expedient; what was right could be discovered only in the New Testament. Whatever conflicted with this record was no institution of Christ but a mere invention of man. It was a clear-cut and compelling argument, though it seemed often to bear little relationship to the "Christian good of Scotland" for which Chalmers was always fighting. The concern for purity and the desire for Christian power and authority were in clear opposition in the lectures delivered by Ralph Wardlaw and Thomas Chalmers in London in 1838 and 1839.

Thomas Chalmers' Lectures "On the Establishment and  
Extension of National Churches"

In 1837, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, the Voluntary Controversy in Scotland had reached its climax. The Church Extension scheme of Dr. Chalmers had aroused great opposition from the Voluntaryists as a measure designed to add strength to the Establishment. The plan to increase the number of parishes and procure endowments for them from public funds, whatever may have been its merits from the standpoint of a believer in the establishment principle, was to the Dissenters an extension of an evil system which had already proven its inability to further the interests of the Christian religion in a manner compatible with its own inner nature. Both parties used to the utmost their influence on Parliament and the administration, headed by Lord Melbourne. It appeared, in 1837, that the Church Extensionists were about to win from Parliament some concession to their claims and in this crisis Wardlaw, as president of the Glasgow Voluntary Church Association, addressed a letter to Lord William Bentinck, member for the City of Glasgow. In the letter he pointed out that the supporters of the Melbourne administration (strong and numerous in Glasgow) were opposed to the proposed increase in appropriations for the Church and would consider such action "no very gracious return for the steady countenance shown by that portion of the community to the Melbourne administration."<sup>16</sup>

To follow up such letters as these, deputations

were sent to London to interview members of the Cabinet and others with influence in the political world. Wardlaw was a member of the first of these deputations, which visited London in April, 1838, spending several weeks in conferences with the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet and the leading men in both Houses. Three members of the deputation, including Wardlaw, were presented to the Queen. Just as the members of the deputation were departing from London, they heard that Dr. Chalmers had arrived to deliver a course of lectures in defense of Church Establishments.

Chalmers' lectures were sponsored by the Christian Influence Society which had been founded not only to defend but to purify the existing Establishment.<sup>17</sup> Scottish Dissenters were, as we have seen, at this time concerned about the possible triumph of Church Extension with its consequent strengthening of the Established Church in Scotland. Members of the English Establishment were correspondingly anxious for the continuance of their system, believing it to be definitely threatened by a hostile Administration. The ambiguity of this situation is clear evidence of the political aspect of the whole question of establishment. Wardlaw might wish to settle the matter on the high ground of Scriptural revelation, but he found it necessary as a leader in the Voluntary movement to engage in strategies involving the use of political pressure. Chalmers, on the other hand, welcomed the intervention of government in the establishment and extension of a national system of

Christian instruction, but cherished the rather naive belief that this intervention would in no way threaten the freedom of the Church of Christ for which he was ready to contend even more valiantly than for his own scheme of Church Extension. Chalmers' lectures were attended by one of the most distinguished audiences ever gathered in London, including, it was said, at least 500 peers and members of the House of Commons.<sup>18</sup>

The case which Chalmers presented for church establishment can be judged by two quite different criteria. One might analyze the logic of his argument, the fairness with which he presents the position of the Voluntarists and the success or failure of his refutation of their attacks upon his own position. Or one might accept what seems to be his own presupposition -- that church establishment is the best means available for the accomplishment of the great end of Christianizing a nation -- and decide whether he has made a convincing case for the use of this means, recognizing the possible evils involved in its use. Chalmers, it appears to one who reads him over a century after the lectures were delivered, would like to put his opponents in the position of abandoning utterly any hope of realizing the great end which he has in view -- that of reaching every home, every person with Christian instruction and pastoral care. This end can be realized only by the system which he upholds. His defense of that system is not



an attempt to claim that it is without error or corruption, but that, rightly used, the system does work and will accomplish its end, without endangering the essential freedom of the church.

### Religious Establishments Defined

Chalmers begins the lectures by pointing out that God and man must both work. What holds true for agriculture holds also for "the work of spiritual husbandry."<sup>19</sup> The Gospel must be preached and to every creature. It is the last portion of that statement which is most important. Establishment is that system "by which it might be made sure that the calls and lessons of Christianity shall be brought to every door," while the Voluntary system is one "under which there is every likelihood that, with all our strenuousness and care, we shall fall short of more than half the population."<sup>20</sup>

Chalmers defines a Religious Establishment as "a certain legal provision for the ministrations of Christianity."<sup>21</sup> This, he claims, does not necessarily mean a connection with the state. The funds for the support of the ministry may have come from "bequests of individuals, or numerous private acts of liberality. . ."<sup>22</sup> but it is an Establishment if "there be legal security for the application of certain funds to the maintenance of Christian worship or Christian instruction in a country."<sup>23</sup> And even though the church be wholly supported by the state, there need not be "even the shadow of a dependence

upon it (the state) in things ecclesiastical."<sup>24</sup> As a simple example of an establishment of Christianity, he employs the story of a Moravian missionary maintained by a West India planter. "The planter maintains the missionary; and the missionary in return, teaches on the estate of the planter -- yet teaches nothing there but his own Christianity."<sup>25</sup>

Chalmers is quite aware that his opposition will not allow him to rest his case with simple and ideal illustrations of the establishment principle and he must, therefore, defend the Christian church under Constantine. For it is to this period in the churches' history that the Voluntaryists are wont to point as an evidence of the corruption that inevitably enters with establishment. Chalmers ingeniously argues that the corruptions evident at the time of Constantine were merely continuations of those which had earlier entered the Church. They have no connection with establishment of the church, for the "enormous power (of the priests) was the fruit of voluntary concessions made by princes, who partook in the debasing fanaticism of the times."<sup>26</sup> The Reformers recognized the fact that the machinery of establishment was sound but the men who ran it corrupt when they "substituted the true gospel for the false one; and sent forth its now amended and purified lessons along the old pathways of conveyance."<sup>27</sup>

Modern reformers are --

"those impetuous and bustling agitators in whose breasts politics have engrossed the place of piety, resolved at all hazards upon change and prepared to welcome with shouts of exultation, the overthrow of those altars which, in holier and better times, upheld the faith and devotion of our forefathers."<sup>28</sup>

### The Weakness of Voluntaryism

The lectures that followed presented the logical unfolding of Chalmers' argument for an establishment of Christianity, as the only effective means by which its ultimate extension to all families in the nation might be guaranteed. The second lecture presents his well-known argument against the application of the "free trade" principle in religion. The law of supply and demand cannot operate in this sphere for "there is no natural hungering or thirsting after righteousness; and before man will seek that the want should be supplied, the appetite must first be created."<sup>29</sup> On the free trade basis, "how. . . reach either the depraved or the destitute? -- those who have no will for. . . moral and spiritual blessings (of Christianity) or those who have no wealth to purchase them?"<sup>30</sup>

In the third lecture, Chalmers states his case against the Voluntaryists. Here he introduces what he apparently felt to be a most important distinction between two types of Voluntaryism: ab intra and ab extra. The former is the type which applies when "a congregation. . . support their own minister." The latter definition is in order when the support of the minister has been accomplished

"by the contributions of others, not members of the congregation. . ."<sup>31</sup> Internal voluntaryism is simply free trade. But when external voluntaryism is employed, the free trade principle is completely abandoned. Therefore, "let us no longer hear of the Voluntary Principle and the principle of a free trade in Christianity put into the same category. . ."<sup>32</sup> They are quite different things, and thus bounds of discussion are narrowed. Chalmers maintains that the question is at whose expense should the reclamation of outcast millions from the ignorance and irreligion of heathenism be perfected -- by private Christians or by an enlightened government?<sup>33</sup> He holds that voluntaryism at its greatest extension (ab extra) has proved itself quite insufficient for the task even of caring for those untouched by the established churches.<sup>34</sup> The state can and should undertake the great task that cannot be carried on by private, voluntary efforts.

"We cannot but imagine our antagonists reduced to a difficulty, who would leave a government free to provide for the health, or the scholarship, or the taste, or even the amusement of the people; and yet would tie up their hands against any provision for the moral wants of the community or for training the families of our land in that best and highest of all education -- the education of principle and piety."<sup>35</sup>

In fact, Chalmers finally asserts, "A parliamentary vote in aid of religious education, is, both in principle and effect, but an example of the Voluntary Principle ab extra."<sup>36</sup> ✓

He is the more eager to defend this position because when Church Extension began, the Voluntaries thought they saw in it a triumph of their own principles but are opposed when a further and, to Chalmers, logical, step is taken of asking the government to supplement the £200,000 raised from the people. Since there is "no conflict, no contrariety, but the utmost harmony of principle between the legal and the voluntary parts" of this operation, it is the Voluntaries who, in appealing to those outside their own congregations, have come over to the side of the establishment -- rather than the reverse.<sup>37</sup>

(The weakness of this argument is immediately apparent, for there is a distinct difference between voluntary contributions made by those who wish to assist a cause they have chosen as their own, and state assessment upon those who have no choice but to pay. Even though the enforcement of the law be compulsion only for the minority which opposes it -- compulsion it is and, by no stretching of the analogy, can this compulsion be equated with voluntary offerings.)

#### The Character and Necessity of a Territorial Establishment of Religion

The fourth lecture takes up the knotty problem of the choice by the government of one denomination as the national religion. Chalmers affirms first, the capability of legislators to decide on both the theological truth and the moral and economic principles of any given system of



belief. Certainly the choice between Protestantism and Popery is not too difficult for legislators to determine. They have only to answer the question

"whether the Scriptures, as being of Divine authority, be the only rule of faith and practise in religion -- or whether, coordinate therewith, the decisions of any councils or governors in the church after the days of the apostles should be admitted to an equal or superior lordship over the consciences of men."<sup>38</sup>

But even if a Parliament could not make its choice on this higher ground, it could surely decide "under which of the two regimes it is that we can best provide for the moral and economic well-being of a population."<sup>39</sup>

The fifth lecture treats of the efficacy of a territorial establishment and contains an admirable exposition of the most positive Chalmers conviction: that a religious establishment must be formed on the territorial principle if it is to accomplish all the good expected of it. Obviously, the same principle which is employed for the establishment of Protestantism rather than <sup>R<sup>n</sup></sup>Catholicism (which, in the lectures and most writings of the day, is always called Popery) cannot be used in the establishment of one particular group within Protestantism. Chalmers generously admits that Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and others all "in essence and effect" teach the same Christianity as does the Church of England.<sup>40</sup> He would even contend, apparently, that there is little real difference between the various Presbyterian and dissenting groups outside the Church

of Scotland and that Established Church. Yet, the choice of one denomination rather than another is not arbitrary. It is a choice made in reference to a superior principle, the maintenance of which demands such a choice. This principle is the territorial principle under which the minister is "the minister both of a congregation and of a parish."<sup>41</sup>

In describing the practical working of the territorial system, Chalmers gives a lecture on the pastoral duties and opportunities of the parish minister. It is a lecture solidly founded upon his own experience and the more convincing because that experience informs every page. The minister who is "to fill this church out of that district,"<sup>42</sup> in which it is placed has a definite task and the means for its accomplishment. This is the

"certain system of moral and spiritual tactics by which the Christian worth of one man might be made tenfold more available for the Christianization of two thousand people, than we ever find it under a random economy -- and by which therefore the well directed labour of five hundred zealous and devoted clergymen, could be made to tell with an efficacy far surpassing all that has yet been realized on a population of a million human souls."<sup>43</sup>

The essential nature of a territorial establishment having been demonstrated, there is little difficulty remaining in showing that one Protestant denomination must be established and maintained as an establishment. This argument is presented in the final lecture. ". . . the

attempt to combine the territorial method with an equal treatment of all the denominations must be given up as impracticable, and some one denomination must be singled out for an establishment. . . .<sup>44</sup> Why? Because

"it is a most rightful wish, on the part of a government, that its people should be placed under an effectual system of Christian education; and if this cannot be done, but by means of a territorial establishment, then it is shut up unto the necessity of resolving on such an establishment, and that it shall be territorial."<sup>45</sup>

The argument that by this choice of one among several denominations, the others are injured is irrelevant.

The injury to these sects is unintentional -- and it is unavoidable. The benefit to the country at large is the important thing to guard; the great and primary design of an establishment is not equity between sect and sect but "to provide a Christian education for the people."<sup>46</sup>

The differing sects ought, in view of the great object to be gained, to resolve their differences. Here Chalmers assumes, with great daring, a position which was to bring the criticism of Gladstone on one side and the Voluntary leaders on the other. The very similarity of the various Protestant denominations is an argument against the endowment of all save one. It is not on the grounds of Apostolic succession that he would argue for the establishment of the Church of England but because it is "fiscally or economically right" to support that one denomination and thus guarantee the existence of the territorial system.<sup>47</sup> It is not because

he regards Independents and Dissenters to be wrong in their beliefs that he would deny them state support but simply because "work can be better done by one . . . servant than by several."<sup>48</sup>

It is worthwhile here to anticipate later events and take from Chalmers' speech to the Free Church Assembly at Tanfield Hall in 1843 this significant statement:

"The Voluntaries mistake us, if they conceive us to be Voluntaries. We hold by the duty of Government to give of their resources and their means for the maintenance of a gospel ministry in the land; and we pray that their eyes may be opened, so that they may learn how to acquit themselves as the protectors of the Church and not as its corrupters or its tyrants. . . . That is to say, though we quit the Establishment, we go out on the Establishment principle; we quit a vitiated Establishment but would rejoice in returning to a pure one. To express it otherwise -- we are the advocates for a national recognition and national support of religion -- and we are not Voluntaries."<sup>49</sup>

they /

When it came to the test, Chalmers valued the freedom of the Christian Church more than its temporal support. Yet by assuring the Church of the support necessary to permit it to do its work on the most efficient basis (the territorial system), the state could immeasurably strengthen and extend the Church's freedom to spread the gospel. In 1838, Chalmers was very sanguine concerning the beneficent character of the state. His hopes were perhaps conquering his power of calm judgment. Would it be possible for any government to support the church without interfering in any way with its freedom? One doubts. But the greatness of Chalmers' conception of the

full working of the parish system is beyond criticism, in my judgment. His confidence in the possibility of state support without state interference is based upon his inability to conceive of any alternative to the state as the support for the system which in his thinking is paramount.

"National Church Establishments Examined"  
by Ralph Wardlaw

The Lectures by Thomas Chalmers were received with great enthusiasm, more, says Wardlaw's biographer, because of the "wondrous eloquence of the lecturer. . . than the profundity or power of his argument."<sup>50</sup> Ralph Wardlaw was requested to present the other side of the question by "The Committee of Deputies from the several Congregations of Protestant Dissenters of the Three Denominations, Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist, in and within twelve miles of London, appointed to protect their Civil Rights." The Lectures were delivered at the Freemasons Hall in April and May, 1839, before an audience far less distinguished than Chalmers' had been but including "masses of the earnest, thoughtful, practical, middle class."<sup>51</sup> The Lectures entitled, "National Church Establishments Examined" were published immediately after their delivery and between thirteen and fourteen thousand copies were sold in a few months.



## The Voluntary Principle Truly Defined and Illustrated

Wardlaw, in his lectures, had the somewhat difficult task both of answering Chalmers and stating positively the position of the Voluntaries, well aware that they differed among themselves. It was of course impossible for Wardlaw to accept Chalmers' major premise: that the only means adequate for providing religious instruction and care for the whole population is a territorial establishment of Christianity. Yet he could not with any great success refute Chalmers' contention by empirical evidence, for nowhere in Britain was there convincing evidence of the ability of voluntary Christian churches to accomplish the task which Chalmers so vividly presented, not only in his London lectures, but in all his writings on the subject. It was possible for Wardlaw to demonstrate numerous flaws in the historical and logical arguments of his opponent and, in presenting his own case, he could make the strongest possible affirmation of basic Voluntary arguments: that Church Establishment is contrary to the ordinance of Christ as demonstrated in the New Testament and a contradiction of the practise of the earliest and purest Christian Church -- that of the Apostolic period. He must add to these arguments the statement that, if fully practised, the system of voluntary support of religion would be adequate to provide for the needs of the whole nation -- but he could no more prove this than Chalmers could prove that there could be state support without state interference in

religious matters.

He begins his lectures by a statement of the general positions held by the two opposing groups and an attempt to define terms and fairly describe Establishment and Voluntaryism. This first lecture is impressive. The superiority of Wardlaw to Chalmers in the field of rational and logical argument is immediately apparent. His style is involved and less interesting than that of his opponent but he builds his argument slowly and surely with minute attention to detail. (It is necessary to point out that Chalmers was not preparing his lectures with those of another and opposing spokesman before him and was therefore less concerned about exact statement and logical proof.) Wardlaw defines the question in the following terms:

"Whether the provision and application of means for the support and propagation of religion be a duty incumbent on the state or the civil Government of a country, -- or whether it should be left exclusively to the zeal and liberality of the christian church."54

Now this is a straightforward statement of the question and one which eliminates a good deal of Chalmers' rather artificial distinction between the two types of Voluntaryism: ab intra and ab extra. Wardlaw says later that of course all Voluntaries utilize both types of support but insists that the real issue be kept clearly in the center -- and that issue is, of course, the relationship to the state.<sup>55</sup> He claims that there is "manifest illusion" in Chalmers' picture of an established church independent of all state

control. "The conditional surrender of independence we conceive to be as necessarily involved in the very idea of an Establishment. . . ."56 The simple example of the West India planter and the Moravian missionary is misleading. The planter does spontaneously and at his own cost what, in a religious establishment, the state does at the cost of the citizens, many of whom are conscientiously opposed to that establishment for which support is demanded of them.<sup>57</sup> Chalmers fails "to discern the difference between the spontaneous exercise of liberality on the part of individuals, with what is their own and the bestowment, on the part of the state, of what is the property of the public."<sup>58</sup>

In clinching his argument, Wardlaw makes very effective use of Chalmers' known views concerning the question of national or municipal assessments for the poor. Chalmers was decidedly opposed to this invasion by government of a province which he was convinced should be occupied by private benevolence. Would Chalmers, applying his ab extra formula, assert that when a family was unable to care for the destitute in its own circle and accepted the help of those outside, it had ceased to operate under the voluntary system and was depending upon a system (external voluntaryism) which "so far from being in conflict with a national provision for the poor is in perfect and precise coincidence therewith?"<sup>59</sup> Wardlaw is using Chalmers own argument and simply substituting the

underlined words for the words "the principle of a national establishment."<sup>60</sup> It seems difficult if not wholly impossible to argue convincingly that the state is purely and simply the sum of all the private citizens who comprise it -- both in its constitution and its operation. The interesting question is whether Chalmers really believed that this was the nature of the state or was driven to that assumption in an attempt to bolster up his argument. In any case, he seems on very shaky ground and Wardlaw makes the most of this fact. Wardlaw might thus demonstrate the logical weakness of Chalmers' arguments without damaging their empirical strength. Actually, Chalmers does not consistently attempt to maintain that there is little real difference between the establishment system and voluntaryism. His main point is that the former is sufficient for the task of Christianizing the nation while the latter obviously is not. Wardlaw must refute this claim and he does so in several ways throughout the lectures.

His first argument is dictated in part by his opponent's misrepresentation of the Voluntary position. "The Voluntary Principle is essentially the principle of diffusive benevolence," he points out.<sup>61</sup> It is the principle of the apostolic injunction: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Such a principle is boundless in its operation and application and has only to be tried to be found ever more efficient. Its growth is identical

to the growth of apprehension of the Gospel's meaning.

"If it (the Voluntary Principle) be (divinely sanctioned) it follows at once that it must be sufficient." <sup>62</sup>

In the second place, the Voluntary Principle was fairly tried "during the period embraced by the New Testament history and epistles." <sup>63</sup> It was certainly sufficient then, though "there are proofs abundant of the irregularity and corruption of its exercise. . . ." <sup>64</sup> Wardlaw points out in this regard that, whenever Chalmers admits the failure of Establishment (as in Ireland) he qualifies it by pointing out that the machine is good though the operation of it is bad. The benefit of this distinction is never given to the Voluntary principle, though the Apostolic period proves definitely the efficiency of the principle even when poorly operated and should indicate the injustice of basing all judgment of it upon its contemporary operation.

In the third place, "both systems have failed" <sup>65</sup> ✓ but Chalmers infers always the failure of the Voluntary system only. Furthermore, it is manifestly unjust to ask the Voluntaryists to point to great success in a field of labor where their principle has been given only partial sway. The Establishment and the free churches live together in the same nations and the Establishment receives by far the greater opportunity. The Christian community has however undertaken the evangelization of the world, a task which the establishment does not claim as uniquely its own. If the resources of the



Christian community, acting on the Voluntary principle, be considered sufficient for this great task, how can they be insufficient for the provision of Christian instruction for the home populations?<sup>66</sup>

Fourth: Establishment has actually had a "repressing and paralyzing" influence on the liberality of men. The great benefactions prior to the Reformation (so great that one-third of the lands in England and one-half in Scotland were in the possession of the church) were due not to the Establishment but to the nature of the religion established. They were "purchase money for the partial or plenary remission of sins."<sup>67</sup> It is these properties which remain a significant source of the wealth of the Establishment. "But will the true christian community allow the reproach to rest upon them, that the principle of a soul-deluding superstition should be mightier and more productive than the principle of the soul-saving truth?"<sup>68</sup>

The final argument becomes a plea for Christian charity. In this plea, and indeed in all of Wardlaw's defense of the adequacy of the Voluntary principle, there is at least an implied admission that it is not sufficient. It would be if the claims of self and the world were not so clearly heard. What is needed is "the more entire dispossession of. . . hearts of the spirit of worldliness by the expulsive power of the new affections of the gospel."<sup>69</sup> When the support of the entire Christian enterprise becomes the sole responsibility of the Christian community, then will Christians rise to this

responsibility and realize the Apostolic maxim, "To me to live is Christ."

### The Parish System Examined

It was quite apparent, in the lectures of Dr. Chalmers, that the cornerstone of his edifice of establishment was the parochial church. The minister is "not to fill his church any how but to fill this church out of that district." Wardlaw fixes the attention of his listeners upon this principle, rightly perceiving that it is the one essential prerequisite for the successful working of a territorial establishment. He insists that

"there is no possibility of a parochial allotment of the populations. Every man, woman and child will choose his or her minister and place of attendance; so that one congregation may be found consisting of members out of all the parochial localities. This is as it ought to be. It is freedom. . ."<sup>70</sup>

This freedom, Wardlaw further asserts, is something that the "worldly system" of establishment cannot banish. He makes it quite clear that the Dissenters will not tolerate the assignment of the inhabitants of a certain district to the pastoral care of a minister chosen and supported by the Government.

"The dissenting minister holds his place in conformity with the law of the divine Head of the church; the parochial minister holds his by a two-fold infraction of that law. The dissenting minister is there by the suffrages and invitation of his people; and is supported by his people's free-will offerings. The parochial minister is there as the presentee of the crown,

of a bishop, of a landed proprietor, of a purchaser of advowsons, or of a town council; -- and he has his support, in different ways, from state endowment."71

Therefore

"... the minister who officiates in the chapel has the very same right to claim as his people those who attend the church, as the minister who officiates in the church has to claim as his those who attend chapel. The distinction between church and chapel, indeed is the very distinction which ought not to exist. The only legitimate scheme is, to place all on a level -- abolishing all such distinctions, -- putting down dissent by cancelling the monopoly which occasions it, and but for which it would have no existence, -- and leaving all, as ministers, rouse one another to action by a friendly rivalry in the work of spontaneous spiritual aggression upon the kingdom of the common enemy, -- upon the irreligion and vice of the community."72

It is in this frank turning of Chalmers' own arguments back upon himself that Wardlaw reaches his greatest peak of enthusiasm and conviction. Certain that establishment is a human device, unauthorized by Scripture or the Apostolic example, he repels the suggestion that Dissenters should sacrifice their minor differences from members of the Establishment for the common good of all. "... is it more reasonable, that we should sacrifice the divine for the human, or that Dr. C. should sacrifice the human for the divine?"73 "... If he does not maintain its 'divine right', then, I repeat, we conceive it, in all reason, to be him that should give way; inasmuch as his conscience can never be so strongly bound by what he regards as human as ours is by what we regard as divine."74

### The Evils of Establishment

Scattered throughout Wardlaw's lectures are allusions to the evils of establishment. Where these are found in the context of defense of the voluntary system, they naturally take the form of complaint that establishment has tended to dry up the springs of Christian benevolence and made it difficult for the gospel to be spread freely as was intended by Christ and his followers. "It is the hand of the state that has strewed the poppies over the church."<sup>75</sup> State support, rather than spurring a minister on to greater efforts, tends to make many men less responsible in the discharge of their duties. Abundant historical proof for this assertion is, of course, available. The incompetent established ministers must have been the main source of illustration for succeeding generations of the foes of establishment, and their number never decreased so greatly that the argument against establishment was weakened. A marked tendency on the part of established churches to lose their evangelical zeal is noted, and ample illustration provided from the history of both the English and the Scottish churches in the latter part of the 18th century.

The more forthright and positive indictments of establishment, however, are made in those portions of his lectures where Wardlaw, admittedly from the standpoint of a believer in the voluntary system but without the immediate need to defend it, looks at the actual results of the system.

These indictments are important: they might almost be said to stand as the classic Independent arguments against the Established Church. First:

"By nationalizing the name and profession of Christianity, they destroy, to an incalculable extent, its essential spirituality and its personal distinctiveness. . . This corruption of the church of God is inherent in the system."<sup>76</sup>

The corruption begins with the throne, for the King, whatever be his character, is "the acknowledged head on earth of the English church, and he presides, in person or by his representative, in the supreme court of the Scottish."<sup>77</sup>

It extends to all the people, for the "indiscriminate admission of unconverted men to the privileges of the children of God" is a means of "deluding their souls, and sending them to perdition under a christian name."<sup>78</sup>

Second: Establishment means secular authority in the church. The very principle of establishment is "a principle of secularization and assimilation to the world, in exact proportion to the force and directness of its operation."<sup>79</sup> Secular patronage makes it possible

"that thousands are destined from their cradle to livings in the church, without the slightest consideration of their future character or qualifications, and are presented with such livings, by those who have them in their gift, with infinitely less thought of their fitness than would be given to any secular calling. . ."<sup>80</sup>

Too many persons are encouraged by union of the church with the state "to consider religion as little if anything more than a state-engine, an instrument in the hand of the civil magistrate for maintaining good government. . ."<sup>81</sup>



When "Briton and Christian or. . . European and Christian. . . become synonymous designations"<sup>82</sup>

missionaries find it very difficult to preach the gospel ✓  
to those of foreign lands who naturally regard the (Go today!)  
characters of those Britons and Europeans they have met  
as "specimens of the effects of that religion which it was  
the avowed object of the missionary to induce them to  
embrace."<sup>83</sup> Thus, in summary,

"by bringing the world into the church, to so vast an extent as Establishments necessarily and systematically do, the church itself loses its original character of separation and purity; and then, as a natural consequence, the salutary influence of the church upon the world is impaired, and even, in some respects, reversed; a deadening and corrupting taint proceeding from it, instead of its original life-giving and antiseptic virtue."<sup>84</sup>

Third: As specific results of the abandonment of the principle of the freedom of the church from all secular authority, there are inevitable corruptions of the church's function. These are listed by Wardlaw --

". . . a confounding of the provinces of the two jurisdictions (that of the civil and the ecclesiastical courts) so that 'from the moment the pastor was armed with the terrors of the magistrate, the power of religion was superseded, and the gentle voice of love was drowned in the clamour of commitments, forfeitures, and distress of goods' (quoted from Hallam)"<sup>85</sup>

The prescription by royal or parliamentary authority of articles, confessions, liturgies, books of discipline and directories for the worship of God so that "a change, unsanctioned by that authority, must involve a forfeiture of

the endowment."<sup>86</sup> Wardlaw points out that

"the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, along with its other authorized standards, is binding on that church, as an established church, not by the authority of the word of God, but solely by sundry acts of parliament; and that by act of parliament alone can any change be introduced."<sup>87</sup>

"The surrender of the right of the people to choose their own pastors. . ."<sup>88</sup> Patronage exists in both the English church and the Scottish. (Here Wardlaw refers to the Auchterarder Case and in a footnote added after the delivery of the Lecture, points out that the affirming by the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords of the decision of the Court of Session, presents the General Assembly with a most significant crisis. His obvious point is that the very existence of this crisis proves his contention that the confusion of state and church powers is disastrous for the church.)

The civil magistrate is given undoubted power over the church. Aware that Chalmers has expressed strongly the church's independence from the civil authority, Wardlaw quotes the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland which states:

"The civil magistrate. . . hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, all blasphemies and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted at them be according to the mind of God."<sup>89</sup>

Obviously "the power ascribed to the civil magistrate (in the Northern Establishment) is as great as any high-churchman of the South could reasonably desire. . . ."90

The "power of the sword" is an inalienable part of the magistrate's power in religion which means that "persecution is involved in the very principle of an Establishment."91 (Wardlaw holds that "all compulsory power in religion is persecution.")92

Closing this summary of the evil effects of the establishment principle, Wardlaw makes what seems to me to be a telling blow at his Scottish Establishment opponents. He reminds them of the "arbitrary attempts to force episcopacy on the people of Scotland" and "the scenes of tyranny, oppression, treachery and blood enacted in that country, in consequence of the resolute refusal to submit to the royal will."93 The Covenanters who resisted even unto death are the martyr heroes of the Scottish Church. Yet they were resisting the very principle which their admirers now support. They were, in fact, rebels against the right of the head of the nation or the governing body to choose a religion for the community. Presbyterianism "owes its establishment in Scotland to rebellion."94 Wardlaw remarks,

"I cannot help regarding it as a very great inconsistency, to uphold the right and duty of governors to choose their people's religion, and in the same breath, to laud to the skies the men who 'resisted unto blood,' striving against the exercise of this very right and duty, as the intolerable presumption of a despot. The friends of Establishments in the

e/

North may be thankful that the efforts to force episcopacy upon their country were unsuccessful; but they must be content to be thankful at the expense of their own principles. . . ."95

### The Authority of Scripture

It has already been noted that Wardlaw entered the lists in the Voluntary Controversy with a firm conviction that the correct system of Church government and the authoritative illustration of the proper relationship between church and state are both to be found in the New Testament. All of his writings upon the subject are based upon this conviction. He insists that the authority of the Scriptures must be paramount. "With the discovery of the mind of God, inquiry ends and obedience commences."<sup>96</sup> That it was possible to discover without ambiguity the true mind of God on this matter, he never doubted. This certainty informs his first full-scale treatment of the subject: "Civil Establishments of Christianity tried by their only Authoritative Test, the Word of God" and it permeates his last considerable contribution: the Sermon on "The Headship of Christ."

His opponent in the present debate apparently does not share this conviction for, as Dr. Wardlaw is at great pains to demonstrate, Dr. Chalmers "never alludes to the New Testament as in any one point settling it, or designed to settle it" (the question as to the establishment of the Church or its voluntary character).<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless he, Wardlaw, must present

what to him and his fellow-voluntaries is the first and final argument for their system: the testimony of the divine mind as recorded in the New Testament.

Why the New Testament? Not because they "set aside any portion of the Bible from its due authority" but because they recognize the temporary character of the institutions established under the old dispensation and the permanent character of those established in the new. From the New Testament record, then, the three following propositions are established:

"I. That in the New Testament, there is no recognition whatever of the power of civil rulers in matters of religion.

II. That in the New Testament, the maintenance and progress of the church's interests are, with all clearness and explicitness, authoritatively committed to the church itself.

III. That all imitation of the ancient Jewish Constitution, in this particular, is from its very nature, impossible; and, were it possible, would not be warrantable."<sup>98</sup>

In establishing the first proposition, Wardlaw rests his case on the well-known fact that the rulers in the Apostolic period were not converted to Christianity and could therefore not be expected to legislate in its favor. It is quite clear that the best thing they could do for the church was "keeping to their own proper province, and letting religion alone."<sup>99</sup> When they did this, and then alone, they were fulfilling the hope expressed by Paul in his epistle to Titus when he asked that "supplications, prayers,



ardently championing the system in which he believes, has much help to offer at this point. The march of events, however, does what the debaters fail to do. Wardlaw's brief mention of the Auchterarder case reminds us that the issues debated in London are to be fought over in bitter but fruitful conflict in the four years immediately ahead. The years of struggle, which ended in 1843 with the Disruption, were sad years in the sense that they led to a major schism in the Church of Scotland. They were years of decision, however, and who can doubt that they contributed in the end to a greater and deeper understanding of both the mission of the church and its relation to the civil community in which it is placed? The Church of Scotland today knows itself more truly in relation to its Lord and to the nation which it serves because a too uncritical acceptance of state support and a too irresponsible conception of Christian duty were both rejected in favor of a free Church which is also national.

It is significant that a Congregational minister, standing outside that great struggle in the Church of Scotland, was able to make some contribution to the later history of the Church. For Wardlaw, though he never succeeded in making Chalmers a Voluntary, must have influenced his thinking to some extent. The great leader of the Disruption was able to use, only four years later, the very arguments that Wardlaw had employed in opposing the right of the state in religious matters.

It may well be that the greatest and most lasting effect of the Wardlaw lectures was this: that the man against whose position they were directed, was helped by them along his way of disillusionment with a system against which eventually he must bear the heavy responsibility of leading almost half of the Church of Scotland.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT: PART ONE

## Wardlaw's Theory of the Atonement

Sources

Ralph Wardlaw's main writings on the atonement are found in the "Discourses on the Socinian Controversy" published in 1814; "Two Essays: I. On the Assurance of Faith: II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon," published in 1830; "Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ," published in 1843; and the "Systematic Theology," published posthumously in 1857. From the time of the writing of the "Discourses" until his death in 1853, forty years elapsed and it might be expected that development and modification of his theory should take place. There is, however, very little change of position in any essential point in those years. It is fair to Wardlaw to present his views without too much regard for the time of their expression, for he himself referred to the work of 1814 as expressing his convictions in 1843.

## The Theory in Brief Review

Wardlaw's most concise statement of the important aspects of the atonement and its reference is found in Discourse VII on the Socinian Controversy.

" . . . I propose to illustrate and prove the five following observations:

I. It is in consideration of the Sacrifice of Christ that God is propitious to sinners.

II. In pardoning the guilty on this ground, God displays his righteousness.

III. The ground on which the pardon of sin is bestowed has been, in every age and under every dispensation, the same.

IV. An interest in the pardoning mercy of God through Jesus Christ is obtained by faith.

V. In resting our hope of forgiveness on the atoning sacrifice of Christ, we build on a sure foundation."<sup>1</sup>

A statement which does more justice to the conception of the love of God as determinant of the atonement is the following,

"The inquiry is: How may the blessed God express his love, so as effectually to express at the same time his infinite and immutable abhorrence of sin; and thus, in 'making known the riches of his mercy,' to display in connexion with it, the inflexibility of his justice, and the unsullied perfection of his holiness."<sup>2</sup>

Conceiving of God as the upholder of justice and the guarantor of the righteousness of his universe, Wardlaw places great emphasis on the conception of "public justice."

"The two great ends of public justice are, the glory of God, and, in connection with it, the general good of his creatures. It is essentially necessary to the attainment of these ends, that the authority of the government of God should be supported in all its extent, as inviolably sacred, -- that not one jot or tittle should in no wise pass from the law; -- that no sin, of any kind, or in any degree should appear as venial; that if any sinner be pardoned, it

Double neg.  
any

should be in such a way as, while it displays the Divine mercy, shall at the same time testify the Divine abhorrence of his sins. All this is gloriously effected in the gospel, by means of Atonement. . ."<sup>3</sup>

Though this statement might seem to indicate that God in His relations with men is conditioned by the necessity to conform to an external standard of justice, Wardlaw denies this:

"While, in forgiving sin, in justifying the ungodly, God acts in perfect consistency with justice as well as with mercy, to the sinner himself, it is entirely a matter of pure unconditional mercy. He is "justified freely by God's Grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

Justification is inseparably connected with reconciliation and sanctification.

"If, under the government of a holy and righteous God, sin is pardoned, we may rest assured that this pardon must be bestowed in a way that shall hold out no encouragement to the continued commission of it: -- that if provision is made for the restoration of rebels to favour, it must be connected with provision for their return, at the same time, to loyal subjection and obedience."<sup>5</sup>

And again,

"Two things were lost by the fall of man; the Divine favour and the divine image. It is the purpose of God, by the gospel, to restore both."<sup>6</sup>

Repentance and faith are necessary if the pardon offered by God is to be received, but this repentance and faith have no causal connection with forgiveness.



"Repentance is inseparably connected with forgiveness; -- but it is not its procuring cause -- its meritorious ground. This is to be found only in the perfect obedience and atoning death of the Son of God: -- and apart from faith in him, and dependence upon his righteousness and sacrifice, as the foundation of acceptance, there exists no repentance that is genuine and scriptural."<sup>7</sup>

Though all may be pardoned by God, on the grounds of Christ's sacrifice and atoning death, not all are saved. ✓

"There is an obvious and important difference between the sufficiency of any remedy and its efficiency. The former arises from the nature of the remedy itself; -- the latter depends on its being applied. The former therefore may even be infinite, while the latter is purposely limited. The blood of Christ may be infinite in its atoning value, and yet limited in its atoning efficiency; sufficient for the salvation of all and yet effectual to the salvation of comparatively few."<sup>8</sup>

This is the earliest statement of Wardlaw's view of the "infinite sufficiency" and "limited efficiency" of the atonement. He opposes this view to that of "exact equivalent" (that "the sufferings of Christ formed. . . an exact equivalent -- neither less nor more -- for the sins of all who shall be saved by his atonement,"<sup>9</sup>) and the view of infinite sufficiency and limited destination ("that the Lord Jesus Christ made atonement to God, by his death, only for the sins of those to whom, in the sovereign good pleasure of the Almighty, the benefits of his death shall be finally applied."<sup>10</sup>) ✓

This apparently small distinction becomes very important in the discussion that takes place between Wardlaw and his opponents, for the whole question of election is involved.

This discussion must be closely examined later, but it is important to observe now that Wardlaw held the conception of the unlimited sufficiency of the atonement, from the beginning. He was never able to believe that Christ died only for the elect, though he affirmed that only those elected by the sovereign grace of God were able to receive the benefit of the atoning death of Christ. Lest it seem that the atonement has thereby failed of its great purpose, Wardlaw constantly reminds us that the salvation of men is not the only, perhaps not the most important, purpose and effect of the atonement. First in our consideration should be the upholding of God's righteousness. The atonement gives added glory to God by confirming that righteousness, by establishing his love in justice -- a combination which is properly termed "holiness." Proceeding from this brief review of his whole theory to a more detailed examination of its important parts, we begin with that conception which seems to us most dominant: the "Public Justice" of God.

#### The Justice of God

God is the "righteous Governor, Lawgiver, and Judge of the universe."<sup>11</sup> God, in this character, must maintain absolute justice for,

"the honour of the Governor, the dignity and stability of his throne, and the subordination and happiness of his moral empire, all imperatively demand that the authority of his law be maintained inviolate, and that, therefore, the breach of it do not pass with impunity."<sup>12</sup>

Justice must maintain "the obligation to obedience and the obligation to suffer for disobedience."<sup>13</sup> Man has disobeyed and broken the laws of God. This, then, is the situation:

"The unconditional absolution of the transgressor would be a flagrant outrage on the claims of retributive justice; -- his annihilation would be a tacit evasion of these claims; -- while if the law has its course, and the demands of justice are satisfied by the infliction of its penalty, he is lost forever, -- everlasting life forfeited and eternal death endured."<sup>14</sup>

The question then is:

"... in what manner may forgiveness be extended to the guilty, so as to satisfy the claims of infinite justice and thus to maintain, in their full dignity, free from every charge of imperfection or of mutability, the character of the governor, the rectitude of his administration and the sanction of his law -- and to provide in the pardoned sinner for the interests of holiness."<sup>15</sup>

The way in which God provides for the pardon of sinners is thus determined by the necessity for the protection of his honor. Mercy is an attribute of the divine character, but in order that it may be practically exercised without detriment to that righteousness which is equally characteristic of God, a provision for the union of mercy and righteousness must be made. The atonement is that union. The atonement provides "for the honorable extension, on God's part, of pardoning mercy to the sinner;" and furnishes "suitable moral means for engendering, on the sinner's part, holy affections toward God."<sup>16</sup> The atonement does completely satisfy all the

demands of God's justice and in a manner that is in perfect harmony with his mercy. The righteous, loving God is therefore free to offer pardon to men.

What is the nature of the justice of God which demands satisfaction in the atonement? Wardlaw rejects the conception of justice as being simply benevolence. "Justice is the attribute that gives every one his due."<sup>17</sup> He defines four types of justice: vindictive, commutative, distributive, and public. The first, Wardlaw sets aside at once as being unworthy of a place in the government of God.<sup>18</sup> Commutative justice is that which subsists between a creditor and a debtor. . . "if the debt be paid, no matter whether by the debtor himself or by a surety, the claim of justice is cancelled. . . no room is left for exercise of. . . free grace or free favour."<sup>19</sup> In distributive justice, the transgressor must receive in his own person the due recompense of his deeds. Public justice "includes those great essential principles of equity, according to which, in indissoluble union with benevolence, the sovereign Ruler governs the intelligent universe. . ."<sup>20</sup> Divine justice, in this sense, is satisfied by the atonement.

The atonement cannot satisfy justice in the ~~first~~ sense of commutative justice. For "there is a material difference between the cancelling of a debt on payment of it by a surety and the forgiveness of sin on account of a propitiation."<sup>21</sup> The debt that is owed to God is one of

obedience and this cannot be paid by a substitute.

Even if this were possible, the payment of the debt would cancel all claims and leave no room for the exercise of grace. The ~~second~~<sup>next</sup> sense of justice, the distributive, obviously cannot apply here for there is no room in it for substitution, which is the very character of the atonement.

The atonement does satisfy the claims of public justice for by it, the authority of divine government, the demands of law, the reprobation of offenses are all upheld, and at the same time there is provided "restitution of the guilty perpetrator (of the offences) to the principles, affections, and practises of holy allegiance."<sup>22</sup> By the atonement, the honor of the governor is maintained in that a rebellion against his authority is punished. At the same time, his mercy is manifested in that the rebels are pardoned and restored to his favor. Finally, righteousness and love manifested together have the effect of changing the rebels into loyal subjects desiring to do the will of the governor.

In connection with the maintenance of God's honor, the atonement can and does, in Wardlaw's thinking, stand alone -- apart from its effect on sinful men. This is shown very clearly in his discussion of the sovereignty of God as manifested in his choice of those who will be saved -- those for whom the atonement shall be effective. He says, "The atonement (was) for God. It was for the glory of God."<sup>23</sup>



"The atonement. . . does not bind the divine Being to the pardon of any, but secures an honorable ground, should his sovereign pleasure so will it, for the pardon of all."<sup>24</sup> God provides the atonement because he could not otherwise, in consonance with his own righteousness, pardon any. Having provided the atonement, he can, if he wishes, pardon all -- but he is not bound to do so. The important thing to observe is that the atonement is universal only in the sense that it is a complete satisfaction of the public justice of God.

The conception which Wardlaw has, then, of the rectoral character of God is by far the most important conception in determining both the nature and the extent of the atonement. God is a Being who cannot act in contradiction to his own righteousness. His perfect righteousness demands the punishment of sinners, for if they remain unpunished both his own character as a just governor and that of his government are impugned. A provision made by which he can, in perfect accord with his righteousness, manifest his mercy toward sinners will be sufficient grounds for his pardoning all sinners. This is evident, for there are no grounds on which he could pardon some which would not be equally sufficient for the pardon of all. Therefore, the atonement is universal in its extent. But its major reference is to God Himself. The atonement is not pardon; it is the grounds on which pardon may be extended. It is not forgiveness, even.

It is the means by which it becomes possible for God to exercise forgiveness. The atonement is not simply the love of God; it is the means by which that love expresses itself in union with perfect justice. It is therefore a supreme manifestation of the holiness of God.

### Atonement and Election

In order that he may maintain and make even more distinctive this separation between atonement and its application and effects, Wardlaw continually emphasizes the fact that the rectoral character of God demands the provision of grounds upon which all may be pardoned while it does not demand that any shall be. The sovereignty of God is exercised in relation to the application of the atonement, in providing for the individual believer its efficacy. Yet, it is fair to say, that this sovereignty of God, if not limited by, is at least linked to the necessity of remaining true to his rectoral character. Though it is never clearly stated by Wardlaw, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that he rejects the idea of the atonement having been made only for the elect because it seems to him to imperil the high conception he holds of God's honor.

An atonement made only for those whom God, by his sovereign grace, elected to salvation would not provide fully for the vindication of his honor. For those who were saved would know that their pardon was granted on the grounds of the

obedience and sacrifice of Christ, but those who were not saved would know that Christ did not die for them, that no grounds for their pardon had been provided and that God could not therefore extend to them the pardon which was extended to the elect. All, both the elect and the reprobate, would know that they deserved no better from God than judgment and punishment for their sin. But the reprobate would know also that the grounds of the pardon extended to the elect were not sufficient for their pardon. Thus, the honor of God would be impugned in that his provision for the re-establishment of order in his government would be insufficient and incomplete. He could not save others than the elect, for there were no grounds on which he could honorably offer others pardon. This, to Wardlaw, is far different from the assertion that he did not choose to save all, though the possibility was fully provided for in the atonement. Sovereignty may be expressed arbitrarily, but justice cannot be arbitrary. Further discussion of the problem of election must be reserved for the next section in which we discuss the sufficiency and efficacy of the atonement.

#### The Universal Sufficiency and Limited Efficacy of the Atonement

Wardlaw believes in an indefinite or universal atonement with gracious sovereignty in its effectual application.<sup>25</sup>

"According to this scheme, the atonement was designed as a vindication, manifestation, or display of the righteousness of God, such as to render forgiveness and salvation consistent with the honor of that perfection of the divine character; leaving the supreme Ruler and Judge, in the free and sovereign exercise of the mercy in which he delights to disperse these blessings more or less extensively 'according to the good pleasure of his will.'"26

Thus, the atonement does not bind God to pardon any but renders it honorable to his perfections and government, should he so will it, to pardon all.<sup>27</sup> The atonement is "an all-sufficient general remedy, of which the effectual application remains in the hands of the divine sovereignty."<sup>28</sup>

This theory of the atonement is set over against the two theories which limit its sufficiency. Wardlaw's arguments against these two theories are effective and worthy of summary, especially since they serve to throw his own views into a clear light. The first of these theories of limited atonement is, admittedly, losing ground at the time when he writes. It is the theory of "exact equivalent." The sufferings of the Redeemer possessed just as much atoning value as was equivalent for the merited punishment of all who shall be ultimately saved by them. In both the Essay "On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon" and his "Discourses on the Atonement," Wardlaw develops a strong case against this theory. As before suggested, Wardlaw accuses the theory of introducing the principles of commutative justice where they are quite out of place, and of overstraining the principles of distributive justice.

The sacrifice of the Redeemer is of infinite worth. How then can it be of value only for a limited number? Furthermore, this theory rests upon the principle of "measuring the value of the atonement by the mere amount of suffering endured."<sup>29</sup> Would not the perdition of all mankind, therefore, be a greater manifestation of the divine righteousness and hatred of sin than the sufferings of the Son of God? But it is of course quite impossible to measure the sufferings of Christ since they are, by his very divine nature, infinite. Any theory, then, which attempts to equate a certain amount of suffering with a certain amount of sin to be atoned for is wholly inadequate. On this theory, the salvation of any besides the elect is a natural impossibility, for if they were to be saved a further atonement would be necessary. It would not be true, as we are accustomed to say, that those who are excluded from salvation are excluded because of their own perversity -- for there would actually be no means provided for them. On the principle of exact equivalent, all attention is directed to the sinner and none to the glory of God which is to be vindicated. Finally, all Grace is excluded from every part of the process of the sinner's salvation save the payment of the debt by the appointed substitute. This payment cancels the bond, and renders the liberation of the debtor not gracious but obligatory.

The theory of infinite sufficiency in the atonement itself, but a limited destination appointed in it, is difficult



to distinguish from Wardlaw's own view: The distinction is important, however, when seen in the context of election. According to the scheme against which Wardlaw contends,

"The infinite worth of the Mediator's sacrifice is. . . distinctly and strongly admitted: -- but limitation is contended for, as lying in the divine destination of the atonement made by that sacrifice; that is, Christ was appointed and voluntarily undertook, to stand in the room of a certain number, and for them, and for them alone, the propitiation by his death, though in itself of boundless value, was made."<sup>30</sup>

Wardlaw confidently affirms his belief in election:

"The doctrine of election seems to me, in a very great measure, to hinge on this simple question of fact. -- Is the first truly gracious movement of the soul towards God the effect, or not, of divine influence? -- I am satisfied that it must (be). . ."

The real issue then is the relationship of election to atonement -- "Whether, in the purpose of God, according to the order of nature, election precedes atonement or atonement precedes election?"<sup>32</sup> His opponents hold the former, Wardlaw the latter view.

He is careful to point out that there can be no assumption of categories of time in regard to Deity -- "all is intuition."<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, there may be assumed a sequence of desire, means, and purpose. The desire of God is to save. He purposes to save the elect and in this very purpose his sovereignty is exercised and election takes place. Yet, between desire and purpose must intervene the means. There must be a way of saving which is consistent with his honor

as well as being an expression of his love. This means is provided in the atonement and it is a universal means, though its application will be limited by the purpose to save the elect.<sup>34</sup> He summarizes this argument and relates it to Scripture in the following words: "The mediator is not represented as chosen and appointed for the elect -- but the elect as chosen and appointed in the mediator."<sup>35</sup> |  
 The references are: Eph. 1:4-7; 2 Tim. 1:8; Eph. 3:10,11; John 17:6.

Wardlaw's most important argument against this theory of limited destination is very similar to the one he presents against the theory of exact equivalent. If the atonement is actually for the elect only, it matters not how all-sufficient may be its nature -- it still offers no grounds for the saving of any but the elect. There can be no universal invitation to partake of the benefits of the sacrifice of Christ, for it is no sacrifice for the non-elect. They can reap no benefit from the knowledge that Christ's death is in its value sufficient for the salvation of all, since it has not that value for them. Indeed, is it not a contradiction in terms to say that the atonement is of infinite worth, when that worth is denied to all save the elect?

Yet Wardlaw himself maintains a limited application of the atonement. Wherein does his view differ from that which he criticizes? He says himself that the important question

is the precedence of atonement over election, but it is quite apparent that an equally important consideration is the dual character of the atonement.

"To me. . . it appears that in providing the atonement there was. . . a double object. There was an object pertaining to the general administration of his government as the moral Ruler of the world, and an object of a more special kind, belonging to the distribution of his favours as a sovereign Benefactor: and there is. . . a general and a peculiar love."<sup>36</sup>

He develops this further in the following statement:

"It is in his rectoral capacity that God offers the amnesty to mankind at large: -- ✓  
it is in his sovereign capacity that he chooses and saves his elect. But both are on the ground of the atonement."<sup>37</sup>

The rectoral love of God is shown in the provision of atonement as a universal remedy and the free offer of pardon and salvation to men as sinners on the ground of it. The sovereign love of God is exercised in the special work of grace by which, on the same ground, sinners are converted and saved.

The atonement is for men, by Christ to God. The bearing by Christ of punishment for the sins of all men is a satisfaction of the honor of God. But when that satisfaction has been given and God can then save all, he does save only the elect -- which was from the beginning intended. This last point is important, for Wardlaw might be thought to make election, as he says, an afterthought. He says ✓  
therefore,

"We speak of election as consisting, in regard to the atonement in a 'sovereign purpose of application.' But. . . this purpose of application was not an after-thought. It was connected with the appointment of the Mediator, so that when his propitiation was determined, the extent of its application was also determined: -- it was known to the Mediator -- it was part of the pre-ordained conditions on which he engaged to execute 'the work given him to do.'"39

The universality of the atonement, we have seen, has primary reference to the rectoral character of God. One aspect in this is that of satisfaction. God's honor has been impugned by the sinful disobedience of his creatures. He cannot pardon any or all of them until the demands of his honor are fully satisfied. The suffering and death of Christ alone can make this satisfaction, for it alone is of infinite worth. Being of infinite worth, it is sufficient for all sins of all men. If it were not, it would not be sufficient to render satisfaction to the honor of God for a single sin and a single sinner. The other aspect is that of divine justice in relation to mankind. The sacrifice of Christ being sufficient grounds for the offer of pardon to all mankind, that pardon must be offered or God acts in contradiction to his perfect righteousness. The offer of pardon, in Wardlaw's system, is simply the provision for all men of sufficient grounds on which they may receive this pardon. The fact that not all men are pardoned does not in any sense lessen the importance of the fact that the offer is made to all.

" . . . even if not one sinner on earth had ever become an actual partaker of the blessings offered, the offer of them was . . . a manifestation of the love of God our Saviour towards man."<sup>40</sup>

Rectoral love is true love, even though its offering be spurned.

It must be admitted, however, that when the offering is spurned it is due in some sense to the sovereign power of God. Wardlaw refuses to accept the label of Arminianism. He maintains, throughout, a consistent Calvinist position in regard to the relationship between man's responsibility and the sovereign power of God. In the first place, he constantly emphasizes the positive side of the doctrine of election. Election is always linked in his thought to Providence. We know that God's Providence determines our salvation -- not our own will and choice. Election is the divine intention of God to put forth his gracious influence. "We cannot with regard to any divine intention, consistently stop short of eternity, and the eternity of this intention is election."<sup>41</sup> Though election is thus affirmed, it is not allowed to become an independent principle on which other aspects of redemption depend. "I maintain. . . the special secret purposes of electing grace. That there are such purposes is to me a clear dictate of divine revelation. But to found all upon this; to make this the basis of the entire superstructure, is another thing."<sup>42</sup>



These "secret purposes of electing grace" are none of man's concerns

" . . . with these secret purposes of God, sinners have nothing to do in hearing the gospel, nor the servants of God in preaching it. . . . There is a sufficiency in the atonement for all; and on this ground the language of invitation is as free and untrammelled as if there were no such thing as any secret purpose of God in existence. . . . God's purposes are the rule of his own procedure; but being entirely beyond the sphere of our knowledge, they are not, and cannot be, the rule of ours."

It is a most important point in Wardlaw's system that this universal invitation to partake of the blessings of the Gospel is confidently given. There are no barriers to the sinner's approach to God. On the basis of both of the schemes which he opposes, the value or sufficiency of the atonement was limited by the deserts of a certain number and there was no atonement for the rest.<sup>44</sup> This is not the case with his theory. Perfectly free, unrestricted and universal offers and invitations in the Gospel are quite consistent with the provision made by the atonement. Atonement has been made for the sins of all; pardon may therefore be offered to all.

"Sin cannot be pardoned except as atoned for. I cannot see, then, on what other ground we can consistently offer pardon to all, and invite all to the acceptance of it, than the ground of the atonement having included all and the sins of all."<sup>45</sup>

But in the other view,

" . . . sinners are to be universally and freely invited to the acceptance of an offered pardon, whilst yet for a large proportion of those so invited, there is no pardon possible in consequence of their being no atonement. . . ."<sup>46</sup>

The inescapable dilemma in which Wardlaw finds himself in regard to this aspect of his theory is that while pardon is offered to all, not all are pardoned. ✓ On the grounds of the atonement, all may be pardoned but not all are. God is free "to have mercy on whom he will have mercy and compassion on whom he will have compassion."<sup>47</sup> It is God who, having provided an atonement of universal sufficiency, offers pardon to all mankind. It is God who, by his sovereign and secret purposes of grace, determines who shall avail themselves of his offer. Yet, while those who are thus pardoned have received a gift of grace in which their own choice has no part, those who refuse the offer of pardon are to be held wholly and personally responsible. This, Wardlaw maintains, is the inevitable dilemma which ✓ the mystery of divine sovereignty poses for the finite mind. It is not possible to penetrate the mystery. We accept it and maintain that which we know in experience to be true: that we are saved by the grace of God alone; that those who refuse the free offer of God's grace do so out of the perversity of their own hearts and are without excuse.<sup>48</sup> Wardlaw is concerned to eliminate not this true mystery of faith but the contradiction inherent in a faulty system which denies the very existence of the grounds upon which the universal invitations in the Gospel are extended.

The atonement is not universal, then, in order that the salvation of all shall be assured. God does not purpose

to save all men. Salvation is limited by election. The atonement is universal in character in order that the glory of God may manifested.

"The grand manifestation of (God's) 'delight in mercy' has had earth for its theater and man for its object. . . In this view of it, the object of the atonement is general. I regard the mediation of Christ as a grand public manifestation of 'the righteousness of God' by which the claims of justice are, in the spirit of them, fully satisfied and the glory of this attribute thus maintained in the exercise of mercy: -- as a general remedy, admitting according to the divine pleasure and purpose, of a particular application."<sup>49</sup>

The rectoral character of God stands first in order, for Wardlaw.<sup>50</sup> ". . . all that he purposes and does as a sovereign Benefactor is purposed and done in accordance with the more comprehensive principles and objects of his moral administration."<sup>51</sup> "Had it not. . . been required for securing and manifesting the divine glory in the forgiveness of sin, the atonement would have been what its adversaries have ever calumniously represented it, a needless encumbrance."<sup>52</sup>

Wardlaw does speak often as though the atonement were not only sufficient for universal salvation but also equally efficient. ". . . we consider the atonement as for all, for all men, -- for the world -- for the whole world."<sup>53</sup> But these assertions are always to be interpreted as qualified by an understanding of the distinction between sufficiency, ensured by the infinite quality of the Redeemer's sacrifice, and efficient application, determined by sovereign benevolence.

So Wardlaw uses such phrases as these: "The atonement wears what I may call an aspect of salvation towards the whole world." ". . . (the) tendency of the work of Christ is to the salvation of the world -- of men universally. . ."<sup>54</sup> Yet this remains only an aspect and a tendency. The atonement itself does only two things: it manifests the glory of God and provides a ground on which, in perfect harmony with justice, his mercy may be exercised. These two are really but one, and we may say in the end that the atonement shows forth the righteous love of God in that he establishes his own honor in providing for the exercise of his love. Neither the love nor the honor of God are in any way dependent upon his saving all men -- or, one is tempted to say after careful reading of Wardlaw, upon saving any.

It would not be quite fair to assert this, however. Wardlaw contends only that the "rectoral love" of God is perfectly manifested in the provision of a ground of pardon even if none are actually pardoned. In order that his sovereign benevolence may also be manifested, some men must be saved. It is fair to say, however, that Wardlaw so stresses the rectoral character of God as to make this the most important aspect of God both in his own nature and in his dealings with men. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the two aspects of atonement which he treats most briefly and, one must say, superficially are the very aspects which might seem to be of the greatest importance: the work of Christ

and the appropriation of its benefits by the believer.  
It is to those two subjects that we now turn.

### The Work of Christ

The sacrifice of Christ has, in contrast with the oft-repeated sacrifices of the old economy, a once-for-all character. "But now, once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It is for this end that Christ came into the world -- "making by the sacrifice of himself, an atonement for sin."<sup>55</sup> The atonement, then, is made by sacrifice -- by substitutionary suffering.

"... it would be far more consistent to renounce the authority of the Bible at once, than to admit that authority and deny that it teaches the doctrine of redemption by substitutionary sufferings or sacrificial atonement."<sup>56</sup>

This sacrificial act of Christ reconciles God and man. God is reconciled to man and man to God. The reconciliation of God to man means

"not. . . the removal of a personal enmity which has no existence, but of a judicial and damnable displeasure which not only has existence but is unutterably terrible."<sup>57</sup>

The reconciliation of man to God means

"deliverance from the judicial wrath of His offended Sovereign, and the reconciliation of his own alienated and rebellious heart to that Sovereign's character, government, and law."<sup>58</sup>



The atonement is sufficient for all this (and the argument for universal atonement must be recalled here, in its definition of the atonement as sufficient ground for the salvation of the whole world) because "the sacrifice was not merely of divine appointment but (was) itself divine."<sup>59</sup> The glory of the Infinite was to be manifested in the atonement. This could never be done by the finite but only by the Infinite. But the human is also present in the Mediator, for man's salvation is the other object of the atonement and it is necessary that humanity which has sinned and been disobedient shall obey and suffer. There is a sinless humanity in union with the divine, yet it is true humanity. "He is man that he may suffer and obey; he is God that his 'obedience unto death' may have a sufficiency of atoning worth."<sup>60</sup> In this union of human and divine in Christ, the sins of all mankind are assumed by one who accepts, as perfectly just, the punishment these sins incur. This one is himself without sin and therefore deserving of no punishment. Yet in his willing obedience and his acceptance of penal suffering,<sup>61</sup> God's glory is upheld in that the sins of humanity are punished. They can therefore be forgiven. An unmerited suffering is borne freely by one who, bearing it, has made it possible for God with perfect justice to forgive the sins of his creatures.

"The expiatory sufferings are endured in the nature that had sinned; while the association with the sinning nature of the nature sinned against --

renders them worthy of the divine acceptance. They are human sufferings; but through this association, their value is divine."<sup>62</sup>

How Christ took upon himself our sinful nature and yet was without sin cannot be explained. He suffers for our sins and not his own. According to Wardlaw, it is the human nature which suffers and by its association with the divine nature, these sufferings are given infinite value. He does not, of course, mean that there is a separation between the human and divine in Christ. The great truth is that he is God and man in every aspect of his life and death. The total and indistinguishable union of the two natures is what makes him in truth our Mediator. Being human, he can suffer the just punishment of humanity; being divine, he can make of that suffering an all-sufficient atonement.

Wardlaw points out that there are two obstacles which lie in the way of accomplishing the salvation of men. These obstacles are: the character of God and the character of man. The discussion of the relationship between justice and mercy makes it quite clear that Wardlaw does not maintain the impossible position that God does not desire the salvation of his children. The obstacle in the character of God to which he refers is that occasioned by the necessities of his righteousness. "It is the removal of the first class of obstacles -- those which arise from the character and government of God -- that is the special province of atonement."<sup>63</sup>

Every obstacle of this kind is removed by the atonement. The sacrifice of Christ is a complete satisfaction to God's honor. But -- "sinners themselves are not changed by the making of the atonement."<sup>64</sup> The atonement makes it possible for God to act in love without detriment to his righteousness. It does, in fact, make it certain that in forgiving sinners, he will so act, for his love in forgiveness will now be based upon the righteousness manifested in the atonement.

The atonement makes no change in the sinner. It changes his situation only insofar as it makes it possible for him to be saved. Without the atonement, this would be an impossibility-granting the necessity for the maintenance of God's absolute justice. With the atonement, it is still only a possibility requiring further action to become a reality. What that further action is, must be discussed later but it is important now to establish beyond question the meaning of the work of Christ in Wardlaw's system.

The work of Christ is to make atonement for sins -- universal atonement. The grace of God provides the atonement ". . . to render the further exercise of grace in receiving, pardoning, sanctifying, and eternally blessing sinners, consistent with the honour of the divine Name, with the glory of Jehovah's character and government."<sup>65</sup> It would seem to me that the important word in this sentence is the word, "further." There is more that must be done if the sinner is

to be justified, reconciled, sanctified. This more is beyond the atonement. The atonement in one sense is sufficient. It is sufficient to satisfy wholly the demands of justice. It is not sufficient in another and equally important sense. It is not sufficient for the salvation of men. It has a reference to that salvation but a reference is of little import. Christ died in order that sinners might be saved. They are not saved by his death. This can be said in another way by stating that "the blood of Christ is infinite in its atoning value, and yet limited in its atoning efficacy."<sup>66</sup> Its value does not save. Its efficacy comes not only from its value but from the special purpose to apply that value. This statement leads us on to the consideration of the "application of the remedy" which is supplied by the atonement.

### Pardon, Repentance and Faith

#### Pardon

Wardlaw constantly distinguishes between the "grounds of pardon" which are provided in the atonement and pardon itself, which comes only when pardon is extended and received. The atonement does mean that the pardon is offered to all men. It does not mean that all men are pardoned. It cannot mean that all sins are already pardoned and that we have only to know and believe this to be saved. Wardlaw here contends against the views of Erskine of Linlathen whose arguments will be noted more fully in the discussion of the criticism

of Wardlaw. The latter describes the "new doctrine" (of universal pardon) as announcing "a pardon actually existing, absolute and unqualified, extending to all the sins, past, present and to come, of every individual of the human race."<sup>67</sup>

The true conception of pardon is distinct from this in every way. "The pardon depends on your availing yourselves of the atonement -- on your believing the divine record concerning it and placing your reliance humbly and exclusively upon it."<sup>68</sup> There is no pardon, then, without belief. "The doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith in Christ, connects pardon, inseparably, with the reception of a truth that is at once humbling and sanctifying; to which the pride and corruption of the heart, in all their forms, are naturally and virulently hostile."<sup>69</sup> What is this truth that must be received? It is simply that God has appointed in Christ a Saviour by whose death we shall be saved. "The cross -- the atoning blood shed on Calvary -- proclaims and ensures pardoning mercy, with all the subsequent blessings of salvation, -- to all who believe in Jesus. . ."<sup>70</sup>

### Repentance

Those who do not believe, who will not accept the pardon offered, receive no benefit from the atonement. It does nothing for them save -- and this is important -- to confirm their guilt, to leave them without excuse. An



atonement has been made which is sufficient ground for the forgiveness of their sins. The offer of forgiveness is made in the Gospel. It is refused -- then man is accountable.

" . . . human inability is human unwillingness."<sup>71</sup>

"Your inability to believe is only another phrase for your aversion to the truth of God."<sup>72</sup> Wardlaw insists that man's will is, in this sense, free. "The will to believe is, virtually, faith; the will to repent is, virtually, penitence. There never has been the will to either where there has not actually been both."<sup>73</sup> "You cannot have your hearts changed against your will. You cannot be made willing against your will!"<sup>74</sup> Wardlaw knows that his statements will be labelled Arminian or Pelagian.<sup>75</sup> He is convinced that they are Scriptural, and that is all that matters. The statement of this position is one of the strongest passages in the "Discourses on the Atonement." Wardlaw is concerned to emphasize again the distinction between the atonement and the sovereignly designed effects of it. But this time, looking at the whole matter from the human side, the important fact is there has been an atonement which provides sufficient grounds for a universal invitation.

This is his outline:

1. "There is salvation. . . for all-offered on the part of God, freely and fully, to every sinner on earth that hears the 'joyful sound'. . . All are invited -- all without difference and without exception assured that, if they come, they shall 'in no wise be cast out.'"<sup>76</sup>

2. The Gospel "ought to be preached without a word said about election."<sup>77</sup>

3. The existence of any secret divine purpose does not affect or alter atonement as ground of offer of mercy to mankind.<sup>78</sup> ". . . the purposes of the divine mind exert no influence on human conduct and can furnish no mitigation of human guilt. . ."<sup>79</sup>

4. ". . . in the entire administration of providence, there are purposes with regard to future events -- which events are to be brought about by the intervention of human agency -- while yet this agency is of a culpable character, and the agents are admonished and urged to a course of conduct in harmony with the right principles and therefore the very reverse of that by which those divine purposes are destined to be accomplished."<sup>80</sup> In other words, ". . . the purposes of God are wrought out by means of human agency and yet the moral character of that agency is unaffected even in the remotest degree, by the existence of the purposes. . ."<sup>81</sup>

In summary, then, the good tidings of the atonement should be preached to all men and all invited to believe the Gospel and be saved. This can be done, with complete assurance, for the atonement is sufficient for the salvation of all. That some will refuse salvation can make no difference. The offer is made; the basis on which it is made remains unchanged.

### Faith

Wardlaw gives his explanation of the nature of faith in his essay, "On the Assurance of Faith." He holds that "faith is incapable of any subsistence in the mind, except as regarding a testimony."<sup>82</sup> From this, he argues that saving faith is belief in the testimony of God concerning Christ

rather than the trust in Christ to which the belief of the testimony leads. ". . . faith, whether considered as justifying or as sanctifying, or as imparting the hope of futurity, derives its appropriateness and its efficacy from the nature of the truth believed."<sup>83</sup> But "the truth can have no saving efficacy unless it be believed. . ."<sup>84</sup> ". . . saving faith must be the belief of something written. . ."<sup>85</sup> ". . . the persuasion that Christ is mine, is a persuasion consequent upon the belief of what is testified in the word. . ."<sup>86</sup>

We are to believe the Gospel.

"It is a testimony from God, revealing a finished work of salvation, and assuring everyone who believes it of immediate acceptance, forgiveness and life. The instant, therefore, that any sinner is convinced of his guilt and hopelessness, and perceives the fulness of proffered grace and the unrestricted universality of the invitation and the welcome -- his warrant to trust and rejoice in it is that instant <sup>as</sup> complete and legitimate as it ever can be."<sup>87</sup>

There are, for ourselves, certain "symptoms and evidences" of the spiritual life. These are:

"the spirit of entire dependence on the mercy of God through the finished work of Jesus;"<sup>88</sup> "Holy action,"<sup>89</sup> conformity to Christ,<sup>90</sup> love to the brethren.<sup>91</sup> But -- "let the believer. . . remember that, make of his experience what he will, no part of it must he ever think of incorporating with the work of Christ in the ground of his hope. Nothing of ours can be admitted there; nothing done by us, nothing wrought in us; neither faith itself nor any of its fruits."<sup>92</sup>

### Summary

The atonement is necessary in order that the righteousness of God may be manifested in the merciful gift of eternal life to men who, by their sins, have dishonored Him and deserved his wrath, and eternal punishment.

"As the guilt of man rendered (eternal) life necessarily a gift, the holiness and justice of God made it necessary that the gift be bestowed in such a way as should leave no stain, or appearance of stain, or most distant ground of suspicion, against his pure and inflexible righteousness. -- Such was the simple use of the atonement made by the incarnation and obedience unto death of the Son of God -- the Eternal Word made flesh."<sup>93</sup>

The atonement is made for man by Christ to God and is sufficient ground for the pardon of all the sins of mankind. A personal interest in the redemptive effects of the atonement is gained through belief in the testimony concerning Christ -- that he is the Redeemer and the Reconciler. God's sovereign love is displayed in his secret purpose of election, by which this personal interest is assured. Nevertheless, man is wholly responsible for his acceptance or rejection of the pardon extended to all on the grounds of Christ's infinite satisfaction and penal suffering.

### Criticism

The key doctrine of Protestant Christianity is the doctrine of justification by faith. Albrecht Ritschl says,

"The Christian doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation. . . constitutes the real centre of the theological system. In it is developed the determinate and direct result of the historical revelation of God's purpose of Grace through Christ -- the result, namely, that the Church founded by Christ has freedom of religious intercourse with God, notwithstanding the fact of sin, and at the same time, in the exercise of that freedom, directs the workings of its own will in conformity with God's expressed design. To the religious discernment this implies in itself the moral restoration of man and all religious blessedness."<sup>94</sup>

Luther affirmed, with tremendous power and constant reiteration, the fact that if we would know God in such a way that we will cling to him and be delivered by Him, we must know Him in Christ "reconciling the world unto himself." To know Christ thus "is to possess the riches of the Gospel." For, says Luther,

"if I know that Christ was sent down from Heaven of the Father for my sake and given unto me, I conclude with a cheerful and gladdened mind that the Father in heaven is merciful and favoureably inclined towards me and knows no further any wrath or indignation."<sup>95</sup>

Calvin, in the Institutes, writes ". . . we simply explain justification to be an acceptance, by which God receives us into . . . favour and esteems us righteous persons; and we say that it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. . ."<sup>96</sup>

Further

". . . man is an enemy to God, till he be reconciled to him by Christ. Whom, therefore, the Lord receives into fellowship with him, him he is said to justify; because he cannot receive anyone into favour or into fellowship



with himself without making him from a sinner to be a righteous person. This, we add, is accomplished by the remission of sins. For if they, whom the Lord hath reconciled to himself, be judged according to their works they will still be found actually sinners; who, notwithstanding, must be absolved and free from sin. . . righteousness may, in one word, be denominated a remission of sins."<sup>97</sup>

To justification and reconciliation must be added sanctification as an inseparable part of this grand doctrine of the effects of the work of Christ. Faith is the earnest of "Christ in us" as well as "Christ for us."

"Where faith is in the heart, there in like measure is Christ also present, on whom we trust in that faith; but where Christ is present all can be won. Faith attains what the law enjoins. As righteousness brings forth good works, so Christ through faith sufficeth thee that thou mayest be just. Then thou livest, doest, sufferest, not for thyself, but for Christ; wherefore is nothing thine -- everything is Christ's alone. The righteousness that is of faith is indeed bestowed without works, yet still it is given with a view to works; it is a living power, and cannot therefore remain inactive."<sup>98</sup>

Thus speaks Luther. Calvin states, "This (reconciliation to God) you cannot attain without at the same time attaining to sanctification: for he is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Christ therefore justifies no one whom he does not also sanctify."<sup>99</sup>

Justification, reconciliation, sanctification -- all are part of the scheme of redemption which God has wrought through Christ. There are certain inescapable problems to be confronted in any statement of this scheme of redemption

of fallen man. Much of the presentation and criticism of any doctrine of the atonement must center upon these problems. Yet, since the atonement is the sine qua non for all the rest, it is wrong so to concentrate on problems involved in its statement that the meaning and power of the doctrine in its larger reference become obscure. Or, to state it another way, it is fruitless speculation rather than constructive thinking if the statement of the doctrine of the atonement is so conditioned by reference to certain problems which it must solve that the great result for Christian faith and life which it must obtain is lost. It is by Christ's death that we are saved. The Christian affirmation concerning the fact has never waited upon a satisfactory explanation of it. The doctrine of the atonement cannot be separated from the fact of redemption but must rather be explained by it. The more positive interpretations of the atonement, the more truly Christian interpretations, ask more seriously and urgently the question, "How does the death of Christ save?" than, "How could God save sinners through the sacrifice of His Son?"

The joyous knowledge of salvation has always been the most satisfactory foundation for an explanation of the atonement. What God has done matters all; what God could do is hardly worth speculating about. A large part of our criticism of Ralph Wardlaw's theory of the atonement is based upon a conviction that, quite unconsciously, he did separate

atonement from its great purpose and result -- asking not how God has done what he has done for fallen humanity but how he could, in harmony with his own being, save sinners by the death of Christ.

The problems, which have loomed so large in the discussion just completed, may be summarized in the form of the following questions?

1. How may the wholly righteous God pardon those who have sinned against His righteousness, without destroying that righteousness by the offer of pardon?
2. If a way be found to offer pardon without damage to the honor and glory of God, must not the pardon be universal -- including all mankind? For if means be discovered for the pardon of some, they must be sufficient for the pardon of all.
3. If pardon is universal, why are only some men saved?

These questions indicate Wardlaw's intense interest in the nature and extent of the atonement and the question of universal pardon. His answers to the questions posed are worthy of serious consideration. This consideration we have sought to give them by presenting Wardlaw's own statements in the context of the problems he was seeking to solve. But we have already begun to consider his views in a larger reference, to ask questions that he did not apparently consider important. We criticize him not so much for what he says as for what he does not say. There is a consistency in his theory of the atonement which is itself disturbing.

For it is a consistency won at the expense of vitality. When he has said all that he can say about atonement, we are strangely unsatisfied. For when he has said all, he has said almost nothing about the love of God in Christ which conquers sin and death; justifying, reconciling, sanctifying the sinner.

God, in Wardlaw's view, seems to be a just God who desires to be merciful. When He is able to be both just and merciful, He becomes holy. Now, it is manifestly unfair to introduce conceptions of time or mutable character into the discussion of the eternal God. Wardlaw would be the first to deny that he had any intention of making God seem to be subject to alteration of mind or purpose. Yet, having sought honestly and at length, to understand and rightly interpret his whole thought, we are led to conclude that he has made it necessary to discuss God's relationship to men in terms like these.

Let us concede that, viewed from man's perspective, the atonement may very well seem to be what Wardlaw conceives it to be -- a securing and manifesting of the divine glory in the forgiveness of sin. But Christian faith has always maintained that, however limited may be our conceptions of God's nature and being, His love is manifested in Christ in such a way that we can know it fully. We know, in this case, because we are taken into the very thing which we know. Christ, God's love for us, becomes ours; we become His. This is far more than a securing of justice, a manifesting

of glory in the forgiveness of sins. This is the divine action in man. This is the holy, just, loving God so acting that what we are is wholly changed, while what He is remains wholly unchanged.

The disturbing element in Wardlaw's thought, to me, is the element of legalism which is always garbed in the cloak of righteousness. It has become my conviction that the work of Christ is limited in Wardlaw's thought of the Atonement, because Christ had become for him a means, an agent -- rather than a Person. Christ is a means by which the glory of God may be secured in the manifesting of his love. It is through the agency of Christ that pardon is extended to the sinner. But it is not the love of Christ which is sufficient unto salvation. Christ does not win our salvation in this sense. Through him we are made eligible for salvation, but it is by God's sovereign grace that we are saved.

Yet when one asks what this saving grace may be, he is told by Wardlaw that it is acceptance by us of the fact that Christ has died for us, that on the grounds of his sacrifice pardon is offered us. It is very difficult, then, to go beyond the conception of Christ as God's means of maintaining His righteousness while extending His mercy. And it is equally difficult to discover Christ as God's holy and active love, creating in us that new spirit which alone is acceptable to Him, adopting us unto the life with Him which is life eternal.



In Wardlaw's thought, the separation between atonement and its consequences is almost complete. It is true that we are justified because Christ died for our sins. But that justification is wholly theoretical. It is the removal of "an obstacle in the character of God," which is the "special province of atonement." By this removal of an obstacle, man is not brought into fellowship with God. Justification without reconciliation seems but a legal figment, yet this is the only kind of justification that the atonement itself provides, in Wardlaw's theory. It is a justification which means that God will be just in pardoning whom he pleases. Is it thus that Christian faith has apprehended the meaning of the Cross? Did Christ die that a just God might be merciful to whomsoever He would please to make the objects of mercy?

If the atonement is connected, in Wardlaw's thought, with a very limited kind of justification it is difficult to see how it is connected with reconciliation and sanctification at all. We have already indicated the problem in regard to reconciliation and sanctification for if the province of the atonement is the removal of that obstacle to the salvation of men which resides in the character of God, there is still a great obstacle in the character of man which is not yet removed. Man, the sinner, has still to be reconciled with God. "Christ," says Calvin, "justifies no one whom he does not also sanctify." The atonement which does not justify neither

reconciles nor sanctifies.

Wardlaw answers all objections by asserting that the efficacious results of the atonement are "applied" by the sovereign grace of God. The sinner who believes the testimony that Christ died for him, is saved. But how, one may ask, can the sinner so believe? For Christ did not die for him in the sense in which he is asked to believe it. Christ died not that he might live but that the justice of God might be demonstrated in the forgiveness of sins. God's merciful love can now be exercised, for it will not conflict with his righteousness. But there is little indication in Wardlaw that the death of Christ upon the Cross is itself ✓ the expression of God's holy love. This is the contradiction in Wardlaw's doctrine which is, to my mind, fatal. In seeking to free the idea of atonement from the bonds of its alliance with election, he has succeeded in framing a doctrine of the atonement which has severed its life-giving connections with the whole action of God in redemption. Here is an atonement which neither justifies, reconciles nor sanctifies. Here is a conception of the work of Christ which makes faith a matter of believing that which becomes true only as it is believed. The only firm, objective feature in this theory of atonement is that which has to do with the maintenance of ✓ God's honor. And it is exceedingly difficult to understand how the honour of God is maintained by separating his righteousness and his love in order that they may be united

in a holiness which requires for its existence the death of Christ.

This is a severe indictment of Wardlaw's theory and we wish to add at once the conviction that his faith was far more adequate and Christian than his theory. It was suggested at the beginning of this critical estimate that Wardlaw was providing answers to questions which are not the central questions for Christian faith at this point. They were, it may be said in his defense, the questions which his contemporaries also were asking. It is perhaps unfair to ask a man to rise in his thought above the level of the thought of his time. Yet, that is what one does ask and the weakness of Wardlaw is that he did not, could not make this ascent. Part of the reason may be found in the extremely controversial character of all his writing on the atonement. Constantly defending his point of view against attack, he was unable to perceive its limitations -- limitations which it shared with the views of his opponents. Another reason for his failure, may be the theological environment within which he worked and the tradition which he received. He was not an original thinker but neither was he, as far as can be discovered, a profound scholar. Therefore, he received rather uncritically the doctrinal legacy of later Calvinism and wrought minor changes in it without seeking either fresh sources of inspiration or direct contact with the Reformers themselves.

One of the most characteristic features of this later Calvinism was its emphasis upon the justice of God as something arbitrary. The justice of God, in Calvin, is certainly an expression of his will and his sovereignty. But the will of God is free, not capricious; his sovereignty is gracious, not vindictive. Calvin's theological heirs, while they adopted his emphasis upon the sovereign will of God, were unable to maintain with the same force his emphasis upon the sovereign will as an expression of God's freedom and grace. The relationship in Calvinism between election and atonement is very important and is fully discussed in a later section. It may be said now that this relationship became a most important problem for later Calvinism, especially because election had come to have different implications than it had when propounded by Calvin.

RS

Wardlaw opposed a Calvinism which had made the justice of God arbitrary by conceiving of election as an act of God in time. This Calvinism had altered Providence so that it became a static decree, rather than a living expression of the freedom of God. But Wardlaw himself was affected by this kind of thinking to the extent that he was able to free himself only partially from its consequences. He could conceive of means by which God could express his mercy while guaranteeing his justice, but the justice which was to be maintained was of such a kind that it was expressed wholly in the relationship of Christ to God. The atonement

in its manward aspect was only a "manifestation" of this justice, not a full expression of it in God's intercourse with man. But the atonement, if it is fully to reveal God, must reveal his justice as well as his mercy. The most important fact about the justice of God is that it is both fixed, as the order upon which all Creation depends, and free, as the expression of the true nature of God who is the Creator. In the atonement, that dual nature of God's justice is revealed and man's destiny altered by it. This is not the case in Wardlaw's theory and it is perhaps the greatest weakness in that theory.

There were two men in his day who were asking questions about the atonement which did not seem to enter Wardlaw's mind. One of these men was returning to Luther for new insight into the problem. Before seeking to establish, insofar as it is possible, the sources of Wardlaw's theory, it is our purpose to use the work of Erskine of Linlathen and M. Leod Campbell further to establish the basis upon which our criticism of Wardlaw is made.<sup>100</sup> It is significant that these men were contemporaries of Wardlaw, that much of his writing on pardon was directed against the views of Erskine, and that Campbell chose Wardlaw as one of the representatives of the "modified Calvinist" position which he ably criticizes in his work on the Atonement.

After this brief review, we shall conclude with an examination of Wardlaw's sources, a study of the "atonement



controversy in the United Secession Synod in the 1840's,  
and a concluding constructive section on the elements of  
an adequate theory of the atonement as discovered in the  
criticism of Calvinism by the insight of Luther.

## CHAPTER VII

## DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT: PART TWO

The Atonement Seen in its Own Light:  
Thomas Erskine and McLeod Campbell

Wardlaw says repeatedly of the atonement that it was made "for sin rather than for sinners."<sup>1</sup> The Atonement does not bind God to forgive any but renders it "honourable to His perfections and government, should He so will it, to forgive all. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Again, "The atonement is made. . . not that He might be just in justifying a certain number but that He might be just in justifying any, in justifying 'whom He will'." <sup>3</sup> Impressed by these and other statements, one critic says of this view: "As a matter of fact, then, *frankly* by the death of Christ no one is saved, but all may be." <sup>4</sup> There is a certain justice in this evaluation, for it is very difficult, as we have seen, to discover in Wardlaw any explicit statement regarding the actual value of the atonement, in and of itself, in relation to man. He seems shut up almost completely, in both his positive statements and his criticism of other theories, to a conception of the atonement which cannot be considered wholly adequate because it operates within the sphere of law. It is only in the appointment of a Mediator and in the application of the atonement that Grace enters. There seems to be no operation of Grace in the

atonement itself. Neither the work of Christ nor the results of this work in redemption seem adequately dealt with.

This is the case partly because Wardlaw himself was stronger as a logician than as an imaginative interpreter of Christian faith and experience, and partly because his adversaries in controversy concerning the atonement were confined within the same limits that he himself accepted. He opposes those theories of the atonement which make it an exact equivalent for the sins of those who are to be saved and those which, though regarding it as of ultimate sufficiency, declare its efficacy to be confined to those for whom it was appointed. In distinction to these theories, he offers atonement unlimited in its sufficiency and limited in its application to those who, by the sovereign benevolence of God, are elected to receive it. Between the second theory and his own, there is, as we have seen, a difference which seems insignificant until one realizes that the priority of election is involved.

Yet none of these theories satisfies us when we seek to know what was actually done for and in humanity by the life and death of Jesus Christ. The rectoral love of God is not the only love we see in the atonement. Benevolence and grace are revealed not only in a "provision made" for the satisfaction of God's honor in order that his love may be manifested in union with righteousness; they are revealed not only in God's

gracious act in "applying" the benefits of substitutionary sacrifice to the sinner. The love of God is revealed in Christ: in his life and death, his Cross and his Resurrection.

Wardlaw felt that he had improved on the theories of exact equivalent and limited destination when he had made his own theory universal, in that atonement is really atonement for the sins of all and not simply for the elect. But in order that he might retain this universalism and yet remain true to Calvinism in his doctrine of election, he was forced to make the atonement even less meaningful in relation to sinners than did his opponents. [It may be questioned whether he was able to retain a Calvinist conception of election, for it seems quite clear that Calvin, in the Institutes, conceived of election as preceding atonement in the sense that Christ died for the elect, rather than for all mankind: ". . . we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined both whom he would admit to salvation and whom he would condemn to destruction."<sup>5</sup> ". . . Paul, having taught that we are chosen in Christ, adds at the same time, that we are accepted in him. How did God begin to favour those whom he had loved before the creation of the world, but by the manifestation which he made of his love, when he was reconciled by the blood of Christ?"<sup>6</sup>] The atonement does nothing, though it makes salvation possible.

It is possible to find, in contemporaries of Wardlaw, a different statement of the atonement -- one which breaks the

circle of legal conceptions within which Wardlaw is confined. Examination of the writings of Erskine of Linlathen and McLeod Campbell reveals a theory of the atonement which helps to make more clear and understandable the deficiencies of Wardlaw's views.

### Thomas Erskine of Linlathen

Thomas Erskine, Born in 1788, trained for the bar but retired when he succeeded to the estate of Linlathen. He devoted much of his time to writing on religious subjects and greatly influenced a number of his friends, particularly F. D. Maurice. In a letter written to Leonard Woods and dated June 16, 1829, Wardlaw comments on Erskine's book, "On the Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel," which had been published the preceding year. He speaks with appreciation of the author's "tone of humble, tender, delightful feeling, as well as of pure and lofty and sublime devotion" but criticizes Erskine's mistaken views of pardon. His own Essays were then written -- at least partly in refutation of Erskine.

The book to which Wardlaw refers was written with the object of refuting "objections raised to the doctrine of justification by faith." But Erskine admits that the form in which the doctrine is stated often makes it unacceptable. He proposes to state it truly. One reads the book with the growing sense that he is in a different world from the one



inhabited by Wardlaw and his adversaries. These men may differ from each other on certain points but they are at one in the fundamentals. Erskine differs from all of them in his whole conception of the Gospel. It is almost fair to say that here we find a different Gospel. That understanding of the love of God which expresses itself in Wardlaw only at the times when he is making a practical application of his theory (and then, he seems to a large extent to abandon his own doctrine) is here made the determining reality. "Holy love is the great principle developed in the gospel. It is the union of an infinite abhorrence towards sin and an infinite love towards the sinner."<sup>7</sup> This holy love expresses itself supremely in the atonement which "is itself the pardon."<sup>8</sup>

Here, immediately, the difference between Erskine and Wardlaw becomes apparent and it is a most significant one. For Wardlaw, the atonement "puts away" sin. This is a juridical term, meaning that sin no longer remains as a barrier preventing God's pardon of the sinner. For Erskine, the atonement pardons the sinner. It is a "universal amnesty."<sup>9</sup> Wardlaw holds that there is pardon for those who believe. Erskine maintains that all are already pardoned and must believe in this pardon in order to be saved -- "When you read that men are saved by faith, it does not mean that they are pardoned on account of their faith, or by their faith; no, its meaning is

far different; it means that they are pardoned already, before they thought of it. . . ."10 This pardon, of which Erskine speaks, is a spiritual medicine for the healing of diseased spirits. True, those who neglect the remedy are not healed: "They are still diseased and miserable, enemies to God, and to their own souls."11 It is evident that Erskine is talking here about justification but he is talking about it in a way which links it inseparably to the atonement. In the atonement, something is done for the sinner; it is done once and for all. Erskine knows no other way to express the atonement than to say, not that it makes pardon possible, but that it is pardon -- final, absolute.

God reveals Himself in the atonement as the God who gives Himself to save the sinner. It is knowledge of this God which is saving knowledge or faith. "The gospel is not 'he that believeth shall be saved' but it is 'God gave his Son to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world'."12

"Eternal life is not given as a premium for knowing God! the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is eternal life."13

"God is light and the knowledge of God is a ray of that light. . . ."14

" . . . when the pardon of the gospel is viewed as a mere removal of penalties and as a deliverance from torments, a man may catch at the pardon and keep his selfishness; but when the pardon is seen to be a gift of infinite love, of holy, disinterested, self-sacrificial love on the part of God, laid down at the door of man's heart. . . no man. . . can receive it until he is prepared to surrender himself and cast all out besides, that he may make room for the reception of such an overwhelming, annihilating, unrepayable kindness."15

The difference between the atonement as the removal of a barrier to the exercise of grace and the atonement as holy love in action is a great difference. There is a difference no less important between pardon as a result of belief in the gospel and pardon as the fact to which the gospel testifies. Wardlaw cannot, by the very nature of his views, stress as strongly as Erskine the saving work of Christ. The atonement simply cannot mean the same thing to these two men. For one, it is a necessary procedure by which the justice and mercy of God are harmonized. For the other, it is the very revelation of the God who saves us.

Erskine develops his theory of the atonement in a book entitled, "The Brazen Serpent" or "Life Coming Through Death," published in 1830. Erskine sees Christ as the word become flesh.

"... God did not content himself with uttering sounds or sending messages to us. He came himself -- Jehovah the word became flesh, and in the history of the word made flesh, we have a concentrated history of God's actions toward our nature, our flesh; and thus we have a standard by which we may at all times measure the mind of God towards ourselves and every individual of the nature. For that which the divine nature did to the human nature in Christ was done to him in the character of head and representative of the human nature; and therefore, is to be considered as indicating the mind of God to every man."<sup>16</sup>

Erskine criticizes the idea of substitution:

"Christ died for every man as the head of every man -- not by any fiction of the law, not in a conventional way -- but in reality,

as the head of the whole mass of the human nature, which, although composed of many members, is one thing -- one body -- in every part of which the head is truly present."<sup>17</sup>

And Christ who is the head of the body which is humanity "did not suffer the punishment of sin, as the doctrine of substitution supposes, to dispense with our suffering it, but to change the character of our suffering from an unsanctified and unsanctifying suffering into a sanctified and sanctifying suffering."<sup>18</sup> A truly great insight, we believe. Here is the apprehension of a depth and a dimension of human life which we do not discover in Wardlaw. Here is a piety which is ever more Christian than the moralism of Wardlaw.

*cf footnote  
p 362*

Here the superiority, religiously, of Erskine's view becomes apparent -- whatever may be said of its doctrinal consistency. The atonement really does something in the sinner, through the indwelling spirit of Christ. "That atonement consisted in Christ's accepting the punishment of sin as the head of the nature, and the sanctifying of his members consists in their accepting it also in the power of his spirit dwelling in them."<sup>19</sup> Christ dwells in every man and the Christ who dwells within us is one who has conquered sin "in the agony of holy love."<sup>20</sup>

"God was never rightly glorified by the penal suffering of the fallen nature, until that suffering was undergone in the spirit of holy love, by one who partook of the fallen nature and felt for all its sins as if they had

been His own and yet had not personally partaken of them. And here that thing was done, -- and done by God in man's nature -- and thus God was glorified in man, and by man, and yet God had all the glory."<sup>21</sup>

Erskine believes that all men are united with Jesus by the flesh. This is the first bond, and all who believe in the love which produced the first bond become united with him in the spirit. The passage in which this is stated is a difficult one, but its meaning is so important that it deserves full quotation:

"Jesus has taken our flesh, and become one flesh with us, in order that we might be one spirit with him. These are the two bonds. All men are necessarily connected with him by the first bond, namely, the flesh, -- and all who believe in the love which produced that first bond, become connected with him by the second, namely, the Spirit. . . And the gospel consists in explaining what the manner of love is which connected every man with Jesus, by the first bond, namely, the flesh, and what it did for each man, when it established that connexion.

"Now the manner of the love we have seen to be this, that God so loved every man, that, in order to destroy the work of the devil in him, He was willing to die for him -- and that he so loved every man, that He desired fellowship and union with him, in the spirit of holiness."<sup>22</sup>

"And that which the love did for each man, when it established the connexion of the first bond, namely, of the flesh, between him and Christ -- is, that during this present dispensation of 'the accepted time and day of salvation,' sin is not imputed to him, and Christ is truly given to him as his head (for "the head of every man is Christ") in whom he has a standing in the favour of God, and the Spirit, or eternal life, which he will receive according to his faith.

"And the man has not to make anything in the matter, he has just to acknowledge or believe what God has done. And this belief will open his



heart to let in the life, the spirit. And thus he becomes connected with Christ by the bond of the Spirit, he becomes a living member of the righteous head -- an heir of the righteousness which is by faith -- he is reckoned righteous -- not in virtue of something put upon him, as in the bond of the flesh, but of something within him, even the life of God, and that life is righteousness."<sup>23</sup>

Linked to Christ in the flesh, we must like Him die to sin and be born again to righteousness. "This life is properly a resurrection life,"<sup>24</sup> says Erskine.

"We are not called on to love men because Christ loves them, or to hate sin because he hates it, but we are called on to love men with Christ's own love and to hate sin with Christ's own hatred; and this we can only do, by being filled with the very Spirit of Christ -- by having Christ dwelling in us, and then it will be no more we who love or hate, but Christ loving and hating in us."<sup>25</sup>

These are daring words but no more so than the words of Paul -- or of Luther. For Erskine, "love is the name of God."<sup>26</sup> The atonement is love in action. Christ is God giving Himself for our salvation. It is God who justifies and by justifying he also sanctifies, for the flesh has been purified by its union with the spirit of Christ. The sinner needs but to acknowledge the God who has already pardoned him in order that the spirit of Christ dwelling with him may live.

Erskine was not systematic. Franks says of his work on the atonement, ". . . there is no complete unification of the doctrine. There is instead a succession of deep glances

into the heart of the subject, whose unity is not objective, formal, and logical, but subjective -- a unity of the temper, spirit, and experience whence they proceed."

✓  
^ ref. in Francis  
2 381

He also points out that, although Erskine united patristic and medieval elements with those of later Calvinism, he seems to have been without much knowledge of earlier theological discussion but arrived at his conclusions by independent study of the Bible and reflection upon it.<sup>27</sup>

(Francis 2<sup>387</sup>)

It is in McLeod Campbell's work on "The Nature of the Atonement" that we see a powerful and systematic development of the ideas which are contained in embryo at least in "The Brazen Serpent." One does not, in making such a statement, hypothecate a dependence of Campbell upon Erskine. There was little if any dependence. Campbell came to his convictions by his own road -- a hard and rugged road of suffering and self-denial.

### McLeod Campbell

In McLeod Campbell, one finds not only a power and depth of thought which has led many to describe him as the greatest theologian in Britain in the nineteenth century, but also an ability to criticize justly and systematically the thought of other men. In his work on "The Nature of the Atonement," he orients himself in relation to the thought of Luther, the Calvinism of John Owen and Jonathan Edwards and the modified Calvinism of Jenkyn, Payne, Pye Smith, Wardlaw and others. His criticism of the position held by Wardlaw is particularly acute and revealing, for it is based upon a totally different conception of the meaning and purpose of the atonement. We understand, through study of Campbell, why Wardlaw was confined to such a limited space in his exposition of the atonement.

The reigning concept of Campbell's system is Sonship. "We see the Father when we see the Son, not merely because of identity of will and character in the Father and the Son, but because a Father as such is known only in his relation to a Son."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the atonement must be seen in the light of the incarnation and the incarnation in the light of the atonement -- for the love of God is seen not in the incarnation alone but in incarnation as developed in atonement. When we are given so sure a principle of interpretation for

the atonement, we are guarded against interpretations of its meaning which are out of harmony with the character of the Father revealed by, and in His relations to, His Son.

Campbell finds in Luther the true conception of the meaning of atonement as the manifestation of the costly love of the Father for his wayward children, a love revealed in His giving of His own Son for them. He emphasizes Luther's injunction that we look always at Christ, the incarnate God. Seeking so to do, Campbell apprehends "the divine mind in Christ as perfect Sonship towards God and perfect brotherhood towards men" and thus "the incarnation has appeared developing itself naturally and necessarily as the atonement."<sup>29</sup> Further, and this seems to us most important in view of the difficulties we find in making much of Wardlaw's conception of "application" of the benefits of atonement:

"If the atonement is rightly conceived of as a development of the incarnation, the relation of the atonement to the incarnation is indissoluble; and in a clear apprehension of the incarnation must be felt to be so. Further, if the eternal life given to us in Christ is that divine life in humanity in which Christ made atonement for our sins, then the connection between the atonement and our participation in the life of Christ is not arbitrary, but natural: and thus the incarnation, the atonement, and man's participation in the divine nature offer to our faith one purpose of divine love, reaching its fulfillment by a path which is determined by what God is and what He wills that man should be."<sup>30</sup>

Campbell criticizes the Calvinism of Owen and Edwards as substituting a legal for a filial standing as the gift of God to men in Christ. Both the work of Christ and its meaning for men is distorted, for the former no longer "reveals and illustrates the great foundation of all religion, that God is love" and the latter becomes arbitrary. "That cannot be the true conception of the nature of the atonement which implies that Christ died only for an election from among men."<sup>31</sup> ". . . they (Owen and Edwards) set forth justice as a necessary attribute of the divine nature, so that God must deal with all men according to its requirements; they represent mercy and love as not necessary, but arbitrary and what, therefore, may find their expression in the history of only some men."<sup>32</sup> ". . . so presented, the atonement ceases to reveal that God is love" (for) "an arbitrary act cannot reveal character."<sup>33</sup>

In criticizing the Calvinist view of the work of Christ, Campbell applies to it also his criterion of sonship: ". . . (in Edwards), attention is fixed upon the obedience of Christ as the fulfilling of a law, and the life of sonship in which this fulfillment has taken place is left out of view."<sup>34</sup> But, says Campbell,

" . . . the proper value of that fulfillment of the law, besides the honor which it accords to the law, is that it is a demonstration of the virtue and power which are in sonship. For the prospective relation of men to that fulfillment



is, not that they are to receive eternal blessedness as the reward due to it, but that God's acceptance of it as a perfect righteousness in humanity is a justification of humanity in the person of Christ, on the ground of which the life of sonship, in which this glory has been given to God in humanity, may be given to men in the Son of God."<sup>35</sup>

Campbell turns from the Calvinism of Owen and Edwards to Calvinism as recently modified, giving an excellent summary of the differences. First, the reference of atonement is to all men and not to the elect only. Second, the need for the atonement is said to rise not from the demands of distributive and individual justice but from the demands of rectoral and public justice. Third, Christ's sufferings are not the endurance of punishment exactly equivalent to that merited by those for whom they are endured, but are the substitution of other sufferings for the threatened punishment -- which sufferings are equivalent in relation to God's moral government. Fourth, Christ's obedience is not the fulfilling of a law in our stead so that righteousness may be imputed to us, but is a moral excellence giving a moral virtue to the atonement whereby it is made proper ground for acts of grace toward sinners and bestowal of favors upon them.<sup>36</sup> Fifth, the atonement does not of itself secure salvation to any but is an adequate provision for the salvation of all -- effectual only in the case of those who are disposed by the sovereign grace of God to avail themselves of it.<sup>37</sup>

Campbell correctly perceives that the "modified Calvinists"

have dealt with difficulties in the system they oppose without disposing of them. The nub of the problem is the penal and substitutionary suffering of Christ. The older Calvinists believed that Christ suffered for the elect the exact amount of suffering that should have been endured by them. Thus the law was fulfilled and the righteousness of Christ imputed to the sinners who are thus justified. Now the modifiers of Calvinism, seeking to avoid the idea of exact equivalent, make the sufferings of Christ by their very nature sufficient for the pardoning of the sins of all men. Campbell holds that modified Calvinism does not escape from the idea of penal sufferings by the mere substitution of "enduring the punishment of our sins" for "being punished for our sins."<sup>38</sup> But if these were penal sufferings, then those for whom He suffered who are not saved, are twice punished -- once in Christ and once in themselves.<sup>39</sup>

These sufferings are still the satisfaction of the demands of justice. Because of them, the punishment which is justly due <sup>to</sup> sinners is withheld. The legal conception of atonement is still regnant. The question asked is still "how we sinners could be pardoned and reconciliation and mercy extended to us."<sup>40</sup> But the real question is not that at all but, "how it could come to pass that we, God's offspring, being dead, should be alive again; being lost, should be found."<sup>41</sup>

Let this passage from Campbell stand as a comprehensive criticism of both the earlier and modified Calvinism:

" . . . if, according to the system of the earlier Calvinists, we draw near to God in the confidence of the legal standing given to us in Christ, and not as drawn to God and emboldened by the Fatherliness of the Father's heart revealed by the Son; or if, according to the system of the later Calvinists, we draw near, having mental reference to an atonement which has furnished a ground on which God may show us mercy, and not in the light of an atonement by which we see ourselves redeemed from the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, then is our walk with God. . . no longer a being led by the spirit of Christ, neither are our spiritual steps in His foot-prints; -- for our experience is no repetition of, no fellowship in His experience, nor the breathing of our new life the free breathing of the life of sonship."<sup>42</sup>

### Conclusion

Thomas Erskine, by his insistence upon the nature of God's love as holy and active and self-sacrificial, swept away the restraint which a concentration upon the abstract idea of divine justice had lain upon later Calvinist thought. McLeod Campbell, by his emphasis upon incarnation and atonement as inseparable elements of the self-revelation of God, removed the barrier between the work of Christ and its effects in man -- a barrier which had caused all thought of God's relation to man to be corrupted by the curse of legalism. Wardlaw in no way benefitted from their work. He read Erskine and was shocked by his doctrine of "universal pardon." I can find no record of his acquaintance with the views of Campbell, and it is certain that he could not have read The Nature of the Atonement for it was first published in 1856, three years after Wardlaw's death.

Had he been able to read Campbell, he would probably have written a volume in refutation of these views. Yet by them, his ~~own~~ theory of the atonement is revealed in its basic inadequacy. The tradition which he inherited had limitations of which he was seemingly unaware. It may be that he thought he had escaped more limitations by his alteration of the system. We may see how slight these alterations were, however, by a cursory examination of the historical sources for the "modified Calvinism" of which Wardlaw was one of the chief exponents.

## The Historical Derivation of Ralph Wardlaw's Theory of the Atonement

It is significant that Wardlaw first discussed the atonement in a series of discourses prepared in refutation of Socinianism. The Grotian theory of the atonement, of which his own is a modification, was historically developed in opposition to the Socinian view. Hugo Grotius wrote his "Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ against Faustus Socinus" in 1617. Socinus had opposed the orthodox view of the atonement, as represented by Covetus of Paris, on the grounds that God who is the party offended by the transgressions of sinners can, if he wishes, forgive without any satisfaction whatsoever.

"God, in punishing men, or in forgiving them, is not to be conceived of as a judge who administers the law of another from the letter of which he is not permitted to depart; but as a sovereign Lord and Prince whose will alone, since he is dealing only with his own rights, is the law of all things and the most perfect norm."<sup>43</sup>

He further opposed the whole idea of vicarious satisfaction. The punishment which justice demands for our sins is corporal and cannot be transferred. The law requires that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" and not another. If another be punished, the law is changed and rendered null and void. The substitute must bear the punishment of eternal death and this Christ did not suffer. The obedience of Christ could not be a satisfaction for our sins because as a man he too was under the law and must perfectly obey for himself.<sup>44</sup>



Thus Socinus rejects both the idea that God's justice demands punishment and that this punishment can be assumed by one substituting for us. His own statement of "the common and so-called orthodox doctrine," which he repudiates, emphasizes these two ideas: "That Jesus Christ is our Saviour because he hath made full satisfaction for our sins to divine justice by which we as sinners deserve to be damned; and which satisfaction by faith is imputed to us who believe by the gift of God."<sup>45</sup>

At the very beginning of his treatise Grotius defines the orthodox view as follows:

"God, moved by His goodness wonderfully to do us good, in view of the hindrance of our sins, which deserved punishment, determined that Christ voluntarily of His own love towards men, should endure the severest torments and a bloody and shameful death to pay the penalty for our sins, that, without harm to the manifestation of the Divine justice, through the intermediary of true faith, we might be delivered from the punishment of eternal death."<sup>46</sup>

But Grotius, in defending the orthodox doctrine against Socinus, modifies it so extensively that it may justly be said that he presents and defends a different doctrine. He concedes the truth of almost all that Socinus has to say about justice and imputation. God cannot be seen "as a judge placed under the law. Such a judge as that could not liberate the guilty from punishment, even by transferring the punishment to another."<sup>47</sup>

God is indeed Prince and Lord. But, this being the case, he cannot also be understood simply as the offended party. The offended party does not have the right to punish. God acts neither as a judge executing the law of another, nor as an offended party having the right to punish. He is, and acts as, Rector, supreme Governor of the world. He is not simply a judge who can exercise equity but a ruler who can exercise clemency.

In the exercise of his clemency, which is founded in his love of men, God must also display his hatred of sin and his respect for the law. This he does by using "the sufferings and death of Christ to establish a weighty example against the immense guilt of us all, with whom Christ was most closely allied, by nature, by sovereignty, by surety."<sup>48</sup> The sufferings and death of Christ are not punishment, as such, but a penal example.<sup>49</sup> Christ's afflictions are substituted for our punishment. Thus he "pays the penalty for our sins" and we are given an example of the seriousness of sin and a warning against it. The punishment of sinners is just and, Grotius proves, it is not unjust to substitute for them the sufferings of Christ. Thus God affirms or manifests his righteousness in admitting the claims of the law and his love in accepting the sufferings of Christ as a satisfaction of these claims. God cannot forgive without an atonement, because he must maintain the order of His kingdom. The atonement

made by Christ is to be seen not as a satisfaction to the offended honor of God alone, but a restoration of the honor and order of His Kingdom.

This quite inadequate survey of Grotius' theory of the atonement is at least sufficient to demonstrate the thesis -- that, in answer to Socinus, Grotius moved from the position taken by the orthodox Calvinists and established a new understanding of atonement. God as Ruler can accept an atonement which does not consist in an exact equivalent of suffering for the sins of those who are to be forgiven. God is affected by sin not as a person but as a Governor who, in exhibiting his love for those who have transgressed, must also guarantee the righteousness of that order against which they have rebelled. "God devoted his Son that he might openly testify of the desert of sin, and of his own hatred of sin, and at the same time, as far as it could be done in sparing us, consult for the order of things, and for the authority of his own law."<sup>50</sup> This is the satisfaction of Rectoral rather than distributive justice, and it is the salient feature of Grotius' theory of the atonement.

It is at once apparent that the great problem with which all advocates of this theory must contend is that, though in one sense sins are forgiven, in another sense they are not forgiven at all. Forgiveness is real only if the sinner is justified. The Grotian theory makes justification

possible; it does not make it actual. Grotius avoided the contradictions which Socinus showed to be inherent in the idea of satisfaction; he did so only by giving up the idea of satisfaction in its true sense. Satisfaction to the Rectoral honour of God is a kind of satisfaction, but not the kind that provides the sure and certain ground of hope for which the Reformers contended. The sufferings and death of Christ are sufficient satisfaction to the righteous demands of God's government so that God may honorably pardon sinners. The penal example of these sufferings and this death are such that sinners may be warned. But there is no salvation by the blood of Christ in this. Christ has not died for us in the sense in which Luther used those words. Justification by faith, under the Grotian theory of the atonement, will cease to be what it was to either Luther or Calvin.<sup>51</sup>

The governmental theory of atonement is combined in Wardlaw with the theory of universal sufficiency. In this combination, Wardlaw is quite consistent. We have seen how cogently he argues against a limitation of the sufficiency of atonement, either by those who see it as an exact equivalent for the merited punishment of those who are to be saved or by those who see the atonement as limited in its destination to the elect. It is difficult to see how the governmental theory of atonement can be combined with any view which makes

the atonement limited in its sufficiency. For if the atonement of Christ be a true satisfaction to the Rectoral Justice of God, then are the sins of all men answered for in this sense. If it be only some men whose sins are atoned for, it is difficult to see how Rectoral Justice is upheld.

On the other hand, it is difficult to understand how the theory of universal sufficiency of the atonement can be held in combination with a view which emphasizes God as the offended party and insists upon the satisfaction of distributive justice. Yet this was the position of the theologians of Saumur in France in the later 17th century. These theologians, of whose number Moÿse Amyraut was the most distinguished, were concerned primarily with the doctrine of predestination and not atonement. Perceiving that in Calvin the doctrine of predestination is simply an explanation of the sovereignty of Grace, Amyraut seeks to correct the tendency of the Calvinist Scholastics of the 17th century to make it into a metaphysical principle. To them, predestination had become the divine decree, the channel through which God, who is the Principle of Being, delivers himself in action outside his essential nature. Amyraut sought to place election in relation to providence and redemption in relation to creation -- with God as the living God, acting towards men with complete freedom. The work of redemption is a carrying out of the work of creation. Election is an expression of Providence.



God is inclined to save all men, but actually not all are saved. The work of Christ has a universal sufficiency but a limited reference. This "hypothetical universalism" is combined with an acceptance of the idea of satisfaction as an exact equivalent for Amyraut says of satisfaction: ". . . (It is) a means to obtain remission and impunity to those for whom satisfaction is made. . . ."53

His statement regarding inclination and actual purpose of God is, though somewhat obscure at points, so similar to Wardlaw's distinction between desire and purpose that some influence of the one on the other, however remote and indirect, must be inferred:

" . . . distinction must be made between the mercy by which God is inclined to render his creatures good and happy, if nothing withhold him from it, and that whereby he really and de facto renders them good and happy. Not that these are two mercies, for they are both one. . . In reference to the first sort of mercy, we grant that it may be in God towards his sinful creatures without any previous satisfaction or condition of repentance. But yet, withal, it does no injury to justice, because it brings nothing to effect. The consideration of the Law transgressed by the Creature intercepts it, so that man remains in his condemnation. For the other, which really and effectually confers repentance and consequently beatitude, satisfaction ought of necessity to precede it, because otherwise it would derogate from justice. . . But God's giving of his son to make satisfaction for us, arising from the former sort of mercy, was not founded upon any preceding condition or satisfaction; otherwise it would be requisite to proceed to infinity or recur to repentance. But the real conferring of sanctity and blessedness which attends it, was grounded on

foregoing satisfaction. Whence it appears that though God might give us a pledge without being otherwise prevented by us, yet he could not remit our sins and bring us to salvation without the intervention of that Pledge. And herein it is that on the one side his mercy is resplendent in willing it, on the other his Justice in hindring him, and his Wisdom in satisfying the latter by such an expedient and giving free passage to the former."<sup>54</sup>

What Amyraut means here, we believe, is this:

1. God desires that all men shall be saved and gives his son to make satisfaction.

2. Part of the fulfillment of the Pledge made to men by God, in the giving of his Son as satisfaction for our sins, lies in the faith of those for whom satisfaction is made.

3. God cannot forgive those who do not believe in the Son who is given for them.

4. Thus, though Christ is given as satisfaction for the sins of all, this mercy "brings nothing to effect." Only those are saved who actually repent and believe.

If this is what Amyraut meant, it will be seen immediately that he posited his hypothetical universalism because of his belief in the love of God. It is this love which determines God's gift of his Son -- not his concern for the upholding of his honor. The atonement is not effective for all men, not because God did not desire it to be so, but because the unrepentant attitude of men precludes his pardoning them.<sup>55</sup>

This is somewhat different from Wardlaw's view, in which the work of Christ is seen primarily in relation to the vindication of the righteousness of God, though Wardlaw too holds that it was God's love which determined the atonement. But the result is the same. The atonement is sufficient for all. Either as an expression of the "inclination" of the loving God (Amyraut) or as a manifestation of the righteousness of God (Wardlaw), the work of Christ is sufficient ground for the pardon of all men. But all are not pardoned, because all do not believe. Amyraut took the same attitude toward this matter of belief as did Wardlaw. Those who refuse to believe do so of their own volition and they alone are responsible. Yet it is God who determines all things. This is the mystery of predestination which must remain a doctrine pointing to the Providence of God.

It would be fascinating to trace in detail the line of influence of Grotius and Amyraut as it leads to the 'modern Calvinists' of Wardlaw's day. Something like the following seems to be the sequence. Grotius found acceptance among the English Arminians. His "Defence" was reprinted in Oxford in 1636 and translated in 1692. Daniel Whitby (1638-1726) and Samuel Clarke (1675-1728) stand upon the Grotian theory in explaining the atonement. Grotius' treatise was read early in New England. Nathaniel Mather quotes it in 1694. Richard Baxter, popular among the New England divines, had acknowledged

his debt to Grotius. But it was in combatting the influences of Unitarianism that the New England theologians came to know Grotius best. Whitby's "Discourses on the Five Points" called forth Edwards's "Treatise on the Will," and Clarke's writings were also well known to Edwards. Samuel Hopkins read both Whitby and Clarke, and it was he who first gave a full presentation of the "governmental theory" of the atonement in New England.<sup>56</sup> Rejecting the fundamental principles of the Arminians, the New England divines nevertheless learned from them.

The British Independents relied greatly upon the thinking and writing of their brothers in America. Edward Williams edited the works of Jonathon Edwards. To him and to Andrew Fuller, who was also greatly influenced by the thought of New England divines, Wardlaw refers repeatedly and with appreciation. Leonard Woods and Moses Stuart, Wardlaw's American friends by correspondence, were the principal inheritors of Edwards, Bellamy and Hopkins. Jonathon Edwards, the younger, whose three essays on "The Necessity of Atonement" reveal first-hand acquaintance with Grotius (he uses one of the latter's illustrations), was often quoted by Wardlaw in his theological lectures, and Wardlaw's conception of will is based wholly upon him and the first Edwards.

To trace the direct effect of Amyraut's teaching is more difficult. It is interesting that the strongest influence upon

Amyraut was exerted by his teacher, the Scotsman John Cameron, who was appointed Principal of the University of Glasgow in 1621 but went instead to France where he was Professor at Saumur.<sup>57</sup> The contacts between Scotland and France have been many and, in Wardlaw's time, John Brown was a student of the writings of the 17th century school of Saumur whose leaders were Cameron and Amyraut.

It is our contention that a consistent application of the governmental theory of atonement necessitates the espousal of some form of universalism. So also, an interpretation of the universal invitations of the Gospel which rules that, in some sense, Christ did die for all men, will force rejection of a theory of atonement which defines satisfaction as the exact payment of a debt. Therefore, the governmental theory and universal sufficiency are natural companions and, whether or not Wardlaw ever read either Grotius or Amyraut,<sup>58</sup> he was bound to be influenced by them in some manner, for he faced the same problems and found substantially the same answers.

#### The Atonement Controversy in the United Associate Synod

The first Chapter of this dissertation contains brief reference to the Secession Church which was divided into two camps, Burgher and anti-Burgher, largely through controversies concerning the right of the magistrate in religious affairs. After 73 years of division, the two groups were



united in the United Associate Synod of the Secession Church on September 8, 1820. Ralph Wardlaw was a child of the Burgher group of the Secession Church and, after becoming a Congregational minister, he maintained close ties with the ministers of this body and of the United Associate Synod. He refers warmly and often to such men as George Lawson, his teacher, and Drs. Brown and Balmer who later became the Professors of the United Associate Synod. But it was not simply by a sense of obligation to his own religious nurture that these ties were strengthened. His name was coupled with men of this church who came under attack for their unconventional views concerning the Atonement. It was because of these attacks that Wardlaw decided to deliver the lectures which comprised his "Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ," in 1842-3. In the "Review of Reviews" contained in the second edition of the Discourses, Wardlaw devotes many pages to a review of his volume by Dr. Andrew Marshall of Kirkintilloch, the same indefatigable controversialist with whom we have to do in the "Voluntary Controversy."<sup>60</sup> Marshall was engaged in refuting the heresies of Wardlaw, in the Congregational body, and Brown and Balmer in his own denomination. He refused to enter into the union of 1847, because he felt that the orthodox position on the Atonement was not sufficiently guarded and he could not join the other Presbyterian bodies because he could not accept their views on Church and State. MacLeod says of

him, "The old warrior in his loneliness was a pathetic figure."<sup>61</sup> This must have been in his extreme old age, as there seems to have been a great deal of fight in him in the 1840's.

We discuss the "atonement controversy" within the United Associate Synod not only because Wardlaw's views were very similar to, and undoubtedly influenced by, the central figures in this controversy, but also because there were issues illuminated by this controversy which are of great importance in a consideration of a reconstruction of the doctrine of atonement without the loss of essential Calvinist truths. Particularly important is the rediscovery by Balmer of the work of Edward Polhill on "The Divine Will" a first edition of which was available to me for close examination.

#### James Morison of Kilmarnock

In 1841, James Morison of Kilmarnock appeared before the Synod in Glasgow charged by the Presbytery to which he belonged with holding erroneous sentiments on the subject of atonement. He seemed to be making the atonement of Christ universal and in the sense that it did nothing more "than to open the door of mercy, and to render it consistent with the righteous character of God, to extend forgiveness to the guilty."<sup>62</sup> He contended that, though election secured the salvation of a certain number, the purpose of atonement was

prior to election -- the decree of election having respect to the application of atonement but not to its provision. The Synod could not induce him to admit the special reference of atonement, whereby it secures the salvation of the elect and he was suspended. He became the founder of the Evangelical Union or, as they were popularly called, the "Morisonians." This group was originally composed of himself and three other men similarly deposed; Robert Walker, A. C. Rutherford, and John Guthrie. They were joined by nine students<sup>63</sup> from the Congregational Academy who were expelled, interesting to say, by the principal, Ralph Wardlaw, and the Congregational Union because of their views on the subject of divine influence. These students believed that, in order to the regeneration of the sinner there was the necessity of a special influence of the Holy Spirit distinct from the influence of the Word or of providential circumstances, but accompanying these means and rendering them efficacious. The students, in a fascinating series of letters to Wardlaw and statements to the Committee of the Academy (which must have been a Committee of the Union) *no* defended their views as being, perhaps, not final and authoritative but at least a valid expression of the right guaranteed to every person in Congregationalism to study and interpret the Bible for himself. Eight churches from the Congregational Union joined the group. By 1889, there were nearly 100 <sup>*Ex. W. H. E. U.*</sup> churches and in 1896, these, with six exceptions,

*connected with the Union with the G.C.*  
 rejoined the Union.

Morison brought his Professors, Brown and Balmer into the controversy and these two did their best to help him in his trial. Attention was therefore turned to their teaching and particularly to an essay by Polhill recently published, with a recommendatory preface, by Dr. Balmer. Two overtures from the Presbytery of Paisley and Greenock were transmitted to the Synod, the first asking that this Essay be examined and the second that the two Professors express their own views before a Committee of the whole house. The Synod took up the second of the two overtures and constituted itself a private Committee of the whole house for the examination of the two men. They were fully cleared in a finding which recommended that ministers abstain from the use of such words as 'universal atonement' and 'limited atonement' "and from all expressions that may seem opposed either to the special relations of the atonement, on the one hand, or its general relations on the other."<sup>64</sup> This would seem to have been good advice, but it was obvious that the controversy could not be so easily settled. The testimony of the two Professors reveals the delicacy of the position in which they stood, for their views were certainly not orthodox. Yet on the other hand, extremists like Marshall tended to pervert the meaning of the Synod's own Confession until their own views became less acceptable than those under scrutiny.

The important matter for the Synod, after all, was proof of the fact that the two Professors were not Morisonians. Now, it is apparent that Morison and Wardlaw were very close if not identical in their thought. Wherein did Brown and Balmer differ? Brief examination of their statements to the Synod will yield partial answer to that question.

Dr. Balmer's statement to the Synod in 1843 was the lengthier of the two, as befitted his seniority. We will consider Brown's statement first, very briefly, for most of what he says is expressed also by Balmer; and the latter must bear the chief burden of the investigation because of his identification of himself with the views of Polhill.

Here is Brown's central affirmation:

"With respect to the design of the death of Christ, and the atonement for sin made by that death. . . I am equally persuaded, that by divine appointment, the death of Christ removes "the legal bars" in the way of human salvation generally, and "opens a door of mercy" to mankind, making it consistent with the perfections of the divine character, and the principles of divine government, to make a free offer of salvation through the faith of the gospel, to every human being; and that, by divine appointment, the death of Christ secures the actual salvation of those, whom God in sovereign mercy, 'from all eternity, has elected to everlasting life.'"65

In describing the areas of general agreement, Brown says, "We all hold that Christ died with the intention and to the effect of saving those, and those only, whom the Father had elected from eternity to salvation."<sup>66</sup> So in its universal aspect, the death of Christ is simply the removal of legal



obstacles in the way of human salvation. Morison saw the atonement in its universal aspect in precisely the same way but he was not willing, as was Brown, to admit the special reference to the elect of Christ's death, whereby it makes certain their salvation.

Balmer, who died shortly after presenting this statement to the Synod, sought to illustrate how his views accorded with what he called "the straitest sect of our religion, the limitarians" -- by which he meant those who would deny any general reference in the death of Christ.<sup>67</sup> He describes what Christ has done for all mankind in terms similar to those used by his colleague: "He has rendered it compatible with the character and government of the Most High to grant them pardon -- he has removed all legal and external barriers to their salvation. . ."<sup>68</sup> But he maintains that this does not in the slightest degree qualify the special purposes of God and the special reference of Christ's death to the elect. He states that he believes the views of Polhill, as expressed in the portion of the treatise on the "Divine Will" which relates to Extent of Atonement, to be substantially correct and therefore was willing to assist a bookseller<sup>69</sup> in his congregation in the republication of this excerpt in a pamphlet, and to write for it a Preface.

He points out that Dr. Marshall, exponent of limited atonement, actually abandons that view in his own treatise

on "The Death of Christ the Redemption of his People." For Balmer says, everyone must admit that the atonement is conceived in one sense as a satisfaction, a ransom, a basis "on which pardon is offered or conferred, that which removes legal obstacles to the exercise of pardoning mercy."<sup>70</sup> Another sense in which atonement is used is: "As conveying. . . the additional idea of provision or security for the actual bestowal of pardon and other blessings. . ."<sup>71</sup> These two meanings of atonement must not be confused. "Universal" must not be descriptive of the second, but neither must "limited" be descriptive of the first.

The interpretation of "Covenant of Grace" was important in this controversy, for it seemed to many that Balmer and Brown were denying the provision of this covenant. Brown does say that he believes the word is not Scriptural "but I have no doubt that the purpose of mercy may with propriety be termed the covenant of grace. . ."<sup>72</sup> Balmer concedes that Polhill speaks of the covenant of grace as including in some sense the non-elect. But, he points out, even orthodox divines have at times conceived of the covenant as having also a general reference. This he proves by quotation from both the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger Catechism; in both documents "a distinction is made between those for whom salvation is provided and to whom it is offered, and those to whom it is actually applied; and here it is plainly intimated

that, in the covenant of grace, Christ and his salvation are offered to sinners indiscriminately."<sup>73</sup> He asks what impropriety there can be in saying that Christ "covenanted to die for all" if he really did die for all in the sense so often explained.

Balmer, whose spirit was decidedly irenic and commendable, concludes that there are three shades of opinion in the church:

"There is first the opinion of those. . . who not only maintain that the death of Christ has "opened to all the door of mercy" but who, believing that nothing but an atonement could have accomplished this effect, would feel at liberty, in so far as themselves are concerned, to represent his death as an atonement for all, or a general atonement. There is, secondly, the opinion of those who ascribe the same result to the Saviour's death, but who object decidedly to the expression just mentioned and who conceive the universal offer of the gospel to be based not on a universal atonement, but on the infinite sufficiency of the sacrifice. And lastly, there is a third class, I trust not a numerous one, who are dissatisfied with the language of our Testimony; and who would scruple to affirm that the death of Christ has opened for all the door of mercy, or removed all legal obstacles to the salvation of all."<sup>74</sup>

#### Edward Polhill on "The Divine Will"

The essay on the Extent of the Atonement, published in 1842 with an introduction by Balmer, was a selection from "The Divine Will Considered in its Eternal Decrees and Holy Execution of them" by Edward Polhill. Polhill, a Barrister who had retired to his country estate in Sussex, was a

supporter of the Established Church but decidedly Calvinistic in temper. The work here referred to was published in London in 1673 with a commendatory preface by John Owen, the great Puritan divine. The pamphlet published in Berwick in 1842 probably contained the whole of Chapter VIII which Polhill called, "Of the Work of Redemption." The entire treatise is interesting and the discovery of a first edition copy in the Library at Union Theological Seminary (it had been brought to this country apparently by a New England Divine named Williams who inscribed his copy with the date, 1692) led me to read it through and attempt to discover what its effect might have been on the controversy raging in Scotland in the 1840's. It is doubtful that Wardlaw read the original treatise, (though Balmer probably had) but he must certainly have read the pamphlet excerpt which supported and extended his own views on the atonement in many ways.

The treatise was obviously directed against the Remonstrants. The repudiation of Arminianism is implicit throughout and explicit in the first chapters. Polhill takes a completely orthodox position in regard to the Sovereignty of God expressed in election. ". . . the decree of election hath no other Cause but the divine pleasure only."<sup>75</sup> ". . . Election. . . is not according to Faith, but Faith according to Election."<sup>76</sup> "If election be founded on foreseen

Faith and Perseverance, where is the Eternity of it?"<sup>77</sup>

The sovereign character of the love of God is demonstrated in the fact that he loves without reference to the qualities of the objects: "To love as moved by the attractive goodness of the Object is to love like a man, but to love Blackamores (sic) & then give them beauty; to love enemies, and then overcome them with love, is to love like God. . ."<sup>78</sup>

We are elected in Christ, but this truth must be carefully presented. "God chuseth us in Christ, Eph. 1.4. . . Jesus Christ as God-man our glorious Mediator did purchase Election, quoad res in Electione volitas. . . Jesus Christ as God-man our glorious Mediator did not purchase Election, quoad actum volentis."<sup>79</sup> ". . . Christ's errand into the World was to execute Election. . ."<sup>80</sup> "The pure fountain of Election rises of itself in the Will of God, but the gracious streams thereof issue forth through the bleeding Wounds of Christ."<sup>81</sup>

In Chapter V, Polhill discusses Reprobation. He defines it as ". . . the not giving of Grace and Glory to the Reprobates."<sup>82</sup> Yet, "God doth by a formal Decree will the Means (of conversion) with their tendencies"<sup>83</sup> and "That God who doth formally will the Means (for Reprobates) doth virtually will their Conversion as the true scope & end of those Means."<sup>84</sup> How, if this be the case, can we claim that God's will is not frustrated by their damnation? His answer:



" . . . God's Formal Decree is only of the Means with their tendencies; and therefore is not frustrated but fulfilled in the actual exhibition of such Means. And God's Virtual Will (though it be for the Conversion of the Reprobates) yet in their Non-conversion is not frustrated because it is not an absolute but conditional Will, nisi per ipsos steterit, 'unless their own voluntary corruption do impede the Effect,' which in Reprobates it always doth."<sup>85</sup>

This idea of a Formal Decree and Virtual Will, Polhill admits to be somewhat unusual, but he maintains that it is allowable as: "mixtly-conditioned Volitions. . . grounded on some Absolute Decree, may be allowed."<sup>86</sup> " . . . the thing decreed in. . . Non-election is the not giving of working saving Grace or thorough conversion in Reprobates, in such a sure and insuperable way as in the Elect."<sup>87</sup> So, there is something which God does decree (the Means of Conversion and their Tendencies) but there is something which he does not decree (working saving Grace) for the reprobate.

Along with the non-bestowal of Grace to reprobates goes the "permission of final sin." Here Polhill introduces the Rectoral character of God. " . . . Permission is an Act of Providence issuing forth from God, not as he is righteous Legislator but as he is the supreme Rector and Provisor, moderating in all Events."<sup>88</sup> " . . . God in great wisdom permits the folly of sin; in providential power the weakness thereof; and in unspotted purity the pollutions thereof."<sup>89</sup> Balmer speaks of a "permissive decree" as "not implying any

complacency in the sinful action or any causal influence in producing it," but says, "the existence of such an act flows necessarily from the fact that he who foresees the action could prevent it if he planned; as he cannot be indifferent to it, he may be regarded as willing it. . . not for its own sake but for its accompaniments or results."<sup>90</sup>

The "Permission of sins finality. . . is the critical difference between the Elect and the Reprobate." God effects this permission by -- "negation not imparting to him such enlightening Grace as he doth unto the Elect,"<sup>91</sup> by "penal infliction" and finally, by "eternal damnation." All men are "lapsed sinners;" only the Reprobates are "final sinners." Therefore there can be what Polhill calls a "Decree of Salvation upon Gospel terms"<sup>92</sup> and a "Decree of everlasting damnation" which has respect to men as final sinners. There is no inconsistency between them. Here let us quote a somewhat lengthy but important passage in which this thought is amplified:

"These two propositions (God decrees to save none but final Believers, and, God decrees to damn none but final Sinners) must be taken in a different meaning. When we say, God decrees to save none but final Believers, the meaning is not, final believers so preconsidered antecedently to that Decree; for Faith and Salvation are comprized in one Decree; but final Believers so to be made by the force of that Decree. But when we say, God decrees to damn none but final sinners, the meaning is not, final Sinners so to be made by force of that Decree; for God's decree makes no man a final Sinner; but final Sinners so preconsidered antecedently to that Decree. Wherefore from that Proposition (God decrees

to save none but final believers) it cannot be concluded that the Decree of Salvation respects them as final Believers; but (because of the different meaning) from that other Proposition (God decrees to damn none but final Sinners) it may be rightly concluded that the Decree of Damnation respects them as final Sinners."<sup>93</sup>

As we understand this, he is saying that God does determine salvation: those whom he chooses, he also saves -- not because they believe (though they will believe) but because he has elected them. God does not in the same way determine damnation, for those who are damned are treated in this way because they are "Final Sinners."

This effort to maintain the sovereignty of God and deny the freedom of man, while yet making him responsible, is strikingly similar to many long passages in Wardlaw. Polhill says, "In the former (the Decree of Permission) God acts as supreme Lord, according to his transcendent Sovereignty; in the latter (the Decree of Damnation) God acts as a Righteous Judge, according to his Vindictive Justice."<sup>94</sup> If God, as Sovereign Lord permits final sin by withholding His Grace and then judges man and condemns him for that sin, can God be in any way held responsible? No, says Polhill -- "God is no more the Author of Sin than the Sun is of the darkness which follows upon its departure."<sup>95</sup> "The suspension of . . . Grace can in no wise make him the Author of Sin. . . final Sin is no fruit of God's reprobating will, but the proper issue of man's perverse Will."<sup>96</sup>

Having laid the ground for the discussion of the Atonement by this treatment of divine decrees, Polhill proceeds to the consideration of the atonement -- in what sense it is universal and in what sense, particular.

"As to the first Queare, Whether Christ died for all men? I answer affirmatively that he did. . ."<sup>97</sup> This statement is followed by forty pages of proofs which are strikingly similar to those advanced by Wardlaw and all other advocates of universal atonement in his day. Then Polhill faces the next question: "Quare 2. Whether Christ died equally for all men? I answer, that albeit Christ died in some sort for all men. . . nevertheless, Christ did not die equally for all men but after a special manner for the Elect, above and beyond all others. . ."<sup>98</sup> His statement of the universal and special reference of atonement is quite unusual:

" . . . God wills that all men shall be saved if they believe, and proportionably Christ died for them all; God wills that the Elect should infallibly believe and be saved and suitably (sic) Christ died for them in a special way; there is a peculiarity in Christ's Redemption answering to the peculiarity of God's Love."<sup>99</sup>

Polhill apparently held that there should be something which all men might believe and therefore Christ's death must have reference to all. There are some who must believe, and Christ's death makes certain this belief for them.<sup>100</sup>

His word for this situation of being able to believe, in that the object of belief is related to all, was Salvability.

"Christ purchased a Salvability for all, but over & besides he purchased many choice Blessings for the Elect. . . He purchased a room for Repentance even for all men, but he purchased Repentance itself for his chosen Israel. . ."<sup>101</sup>

Polhill vehemently repudiates the suggestion that the Elect are redeemed not because Christ died for them in a special way but because "these particularly applied his Death by Faith which others did not." "I answer that either this application by Faith was merited by Christ's Death or not; if so, then Christ redeemed them in a special manner, because by his Death he impetrated (sic) Faith for them, which he did not for all; if not, then they were redeemed from among men by themselves and their own free will and not by Christ and his Death. . ."<sup>102</sup> (In wrestling with this dilemma, Wardlaw cannot so boldly choose the first proposition and is therefore greatly exercised to explain how the effects of the atonement are appropriated unto salvation by some, and not by others. He always comes perilously close to the second affirmation, though he consistently denies that he is Arminian or Pelagian.)

Polhill explains the two ways in which the death of Christ is to be understood, and they correspond to the universal and special atonement statements of Balmer.

"God may be said to will the salvation of men through Christ's death two ways; either because he wills that Christ's death should be



a Price infallibly procuring their Faith and Salvation, or else because he wills that there should be in Christ's death an aptness and sufficiency to save them on Gospel terms; the former Will points only at the Elect and is fulfilled in their Grace and Glory; the latter extends to all man and is fulfilled in the aptness and sufficiency of Christ's death to save them on Gospel terms. . . "103

There is missing in Polhill any great emphasis upon atonement as satisfaction due the honor of God, though that element is present. His major concern is the reconciling of the universality of atonement and the particularity of salvation, and the seeming contradiction between God's sovereign electing Grace and the finality with which He is believed to judge those who, if His decrees be what they seem to be, have no choice but to rest in final sin. There is however one passage which we quote in conclusion as indicating his thought concerning justice of two kinds: God's own justice which must be satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ, and that justice in relationship to man for whose sins satisfaction is made.

" . . . Men's Sins are Debts & Rebellions, and satisfaction is due to God as the great Creditor and Law-giver; but this satisfaction was not made by men themselves but by Jesus Christ as their Surety, and this Surety was not procured by men but provided by God himself and being provided by God, he did not pay down his satisfactory Blood in such sort as that men should be thereby immediately, ipso facto, absolved from their Debts and Rebellions, but in such sort, as that men may be acquitted from their Debts and Rebellions if they repent and believe: wherefore, if they do neither, they can have no benefit by Christ's Satisfaction, and by consequence a second, Satisfaction may be justly exacted from them."104

### Conclusion

Robert Balmer, in the above-mentioned paper on the Doctrine of Divine Decrees, remarks, "In referring to the doctrine of divine decrees, Dr. Wardlaw has expressed it as his opinion that the proper place for the discussion of it is not at the commencement but at the conclusion of a system of divinity."<sup>105</sup> Balmer points out, in support of Wardlaw's statement, that Calvin does not discuss the subject of predestination until he has given a full account of the great scheme of redemption. Later Calvinists have not followed him in this. Balmer goes on, however, to express stern disapproval of the way in which Calvin represents God

"not only. . . as decreeing sinful actions, but as willing or desiring them, and as exerting a positive influence in producing them. What less is implied in the assertions of Calvin that the 'decree of God is the ground of the untoward disposition of the wicked to the means of grace!; and that 'the cause of men's hearts being hardened is the secret counsel of God'?"<sup>106</sup>

He states that more recent divines of the Calvinist school have introduced the modification "that while sinful as well as good actions are decreed or foreordained of God, they are not decreed in the same sense; the latter being the objects of an effective, the former only of a permissive decree."<sup>107</sup>

We have seen how closely Balmer's conception of the "permissive decree" resembles that of Polhill. Balmer was a scholar and there can be no doubt but that he had read widely

in the theological literature of the 17th century.

There, especially in the writings of the great Independents, he found portrayed both the conception of divine decrees and of universal atonement which he believed to be true to the Gospel, though a departure from Calvin's teaching. He refers particularly to Richard Baxter's "Confession of his faith" as authority for the statement that the Westminster divines, in speaking against universal redemption (in Chap. iii., sec. 6 and chap. viii, sec. 8) "were not repudiating the idea that Christ bore the punishment of all men's sins and satisfied God's justice wholly for all sins, but were renouncing the universality of special redemption, accompanied with an intention of actual application of the saving benefits in time."<sup>108</sup> Baxter, of course, was Presbyterian but in a <sup>? moderate</sup> <sup>space</sup> restless sort of way. He expressed his dislike for the laxness of the established church in terms very similar to those used by Browne, for he said he was offended by "promiscuous giving of the Lord's Supper to drunkards, swearers, and all who had not been excommunicated by a bishop or his chancellor." Critical of the Brownists and other sectaries for the disorder and anarchy they caused, he nevertheless had some of the sectarian spirit himself as his determined and life-long fight for the freedom to change his position indicates. It should not be forgotten that he, on the Presbyterian side, was most influential in the attempt made in 1690 to draw the Presbyterians and Congregationalists together.

Edward Polhill would have been particularly congenial to Balmer and Wardlaw in Scotland, and to the Congregationalists in England who were promoting modified Calvinism. It may be doubted whether they read his book in its entirety but the pamphlet reprint, given added publicity by the controversy, must have found its way into their libraries and been read with approval. Not only does Polhill make an earnest attempt to solve the problem of eternal decrees but he clearly argues for an atonement with double reference. He wrote in 1673, was commended by John Owen and was known to have Presbyterian leanings. However doubtful Balmer's critics might be of Polhill's orthodoxy, he had an undeniable authority. The Calvinist tendency of his thought gave him that authority with the Presbyterians. His recommendation by John Owen, who was converted to Congregationalism by reading a treatise sent to the Westminster Assembly by John Cotton of Boston, gave him standing with those in the Congregational group who had a reverence for their past. Yet of course it was the content of his thought which was most appealing.

Polhill was trying to do what Balmer, Brown, Wardlaw, and others were also seeking to accomplish: to give greater glory to God and to His reign of righteousness and yet maintain the universalism of the Gospel promises. They were attempting to maintain the doctrine of election in all its force and yet prove that man is wholly and solely responsible for his

damnation. They were trying to make atonement what the Gospel record testifies it to be -- God so loving the world that he gave his only-begotten son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life -- and yet reconcile it with a conception of God's sovereignty which sees him electing to salvation and damnation at the very beginning of creation.

Wardlaw sought to deal with the problem of election largely by subordinating it. He placed his major emphasis on the atonement as a perfect and wholly sufficient satisfaction of the honor and impugned righteousness of God. Polhill dealt thoroughly with the problem of election and gave scant attention to the nature of the atonement itself. But it is interesting to see how both men, in developing their theory of an atonement which has general reference to all men and special reference to the elect, failed to portray the work of Christ in vital and convincing terms. The maintenance of the sovereignty of God requires, for Polhill, detailed explanation of the way in which God remains sovereign without ceasing to be both just and merciful. The maintenance of the honor of God requires, for Wardlaw, careful explanation of the way in which God satisfies the requirements of his justice without ceasing to be both sovereign and gracious. Grace and mercy, in both cases, enter the scheme as subordinate qualities. They are, in a very real sense, of an arbitrary character, if one regards them in and



of themselves. They become consistent only when sovereignty and justice are seen as their matrix.

This necessity to force grace and mercy into conformity with sovereignty and justice is, in our belief, encountered because sovereignty and justice are themselves misconceived. ✓ The order which God Himself creates is of a stable, unchanging character. The great testimony of Hebrew prophecy is that man in opposing this moral order can only shatter himself. There is a justice which God has established which cannot be altered. But this unalterable justice is itself an expression of the mercy of God, his free and gracious love. By divine self-limitation in creation, he makes it possible for man to understand the nature of the order of which he is a part. He gives to man the law, which is knowledge of right and wrong. To know the justice of God is to know that there is one who maintains that order without which there could be no enduring existence.

The law, however, is not enough. Justice which is an expression of God's love is not dictatorial; it cannot force man to be good, though it can and does impose the penalties for wrongdoing. The love of God requires further expression ✓ in an act which overcomes man's resistance to the law without overcoming the law or destroying man's freedom. In this act, God's sovereignty is expressed and his justice maintained while love is fully revealed. The justice and sovereignty of God should thus be seen always in natural and intimate association

with that supreme expression of his love which is the atonement.

Not only would it be foolish to claim that the love of God can ever be separated from His righteousness or His Grace from His sovereignty, but theological doctrines concerning the death of Christ must express these qualities in such a way that there is no hint of the subordination of one to the other. It is not simply a question of where, in the theological system, the doctrine of election will be placed. The true question is what that doctrine will mean in relation to the work of redemption. If it so qualifies God's revelation in Christ that His love there expressed is made dependent upon and subject to interpretation by its superior principle, then faith is hampered and knowledge of God in some sense corrupted. So also, conceptions of the justice and honor of God which are allowed to take precedence, and assert a kind of authority over, His revelation of Himself in Christ are not only destructive of clear thinking about the atonement but end by weakening to some extent our faith in the holiness of God.<sup>109</sup> These strictures are made by one who is aware of his youth and inexperience, both in theological study and discussion and in Christian preaching and pastoral work. They are, for that reason, stated with a due sense of their mixture of error and truth. But they are made in faith and in hope, not in a spirit of cynicism or defeat. In each Christian who has ever written on the Atonement, lived

that faith and hope that by his words some portion of the power and passion of Christ's sacrificial love might be revealed anew, that by his agency the work of Christ might be better known and its divine cure for sin be more humbly sought. We criticize the words of these men of another day, we reject some of the ways in which they set before men the plan of God for their salvation; we do not deny their great faith but gladly affirm it as our own and pray that we may be led to consecration equal to theirs. And we seek from them, as from all who have named Christ as their only Lord and Saviour, light upon His Word and knowledge of His Grace.

Toward an Adequate Theory of the Atonement in  
Reformed Theology: The Corrective of Luther upon Calvinist  
Doctrine

Our study of the writings of Ralph Wardlaw on the nature and extent of the atonement has served to emphasize the peril of legalism which besets later Calvinism. Whether it be the "strict Calvinism" of Owen and Jonathon Edwards, the governmental theory of Hopkins and the younger Edwards, or the "modified Calvinism" of Wardlaw and his contemporaries, there is no significant breaking out of the prison which confines thought of the atonement. That prison has walls that are built by concepts such as "satisfaction," "penal suffering," "divine justice," "substitution." None of these concepts is false; each must find its place in any adequate theory of the atonement. It is our contention that the factor which converts

these ideas into elements in a structure whose nature is truly that of a prison, is the unreal separation of atonement and its results. In the Calvinist theories of the atonement, there is always a locked door, an insurmountable barrier between the death of Christ and the life of the believer. It may be said that this locked door is always somehow opened, this barrier in the end surmounted. There is always some way in which the inestimable benefits of Christ's sacrifice are made effective in relation to the destiny of man. These ways are, indeed, various yet they all have one thing in common. They are all artificial and unconvincing. And they serve to emphasize rather than to diminish the lack of continuity between atonement and reconciliation and sanctification. There is no satisfactory connection between atonement and its results in the life of the believer because there is an inadequate relationship established between incarnation and atonement. ✓

The thought of M'Leod Campbell is creative at this very point because, though living in a Calvinist environment and profiting from the great strengths of Calvinist thought, he was yet able to discern this serious problem, unsolved in all traditional Calvinist presentations of atonement. Not only was he able to see the problem with amazing clarity, but he took steps toward a solution. It is most interesting and significant that he found in Reformation thought the corrective

for later Calvinist teaching. He knew that only in reformed theology could one find a full and adequate appreciation and treatment of justification. He knew that there could be no Christian view of atonement which did not relate it organically to justification. One can only guess that he either sensed or discovered, through his own study, that Patristic thought dwelt insufficiently upon this all-important fact of justification as the central doctrine for Christian thought. He sought a theory of atonement which would combine the vital relationship to justification and the no less important relationship to incarnation. In Patristic thought, one might discover the latter without the former. In Calvinism, atonement had been made the basis of justification but separation of incarnation and atonement had made the whole relationship between God and Christ and Christ and man legal rather than paternal and filial. In Luther, Campbell found the basis for a truly Christian theory of atonement.

Before examining what Campbell found in Luther, and its significance for an adequate theory of atonement, we ought to observe those elements in the thought of Calvin which led to the development of what we have termed Calvinist legalism in the theory of atonement. It is always best not to attribute to the founder of a system the errors which have crept into the system in the process of its development at the hands of lesser men. This is particularly true when one discusses Calvin and



Calvinism. It is our purpose here to take the very best expressions concerning atonement to be found in Calvin and determine whether they do contain the seeds of the later developments. Ralph Wardlaw was perhaps not a very good Calvinist; we give further attention to that problem in the concluding chapter. However, when one has read most of the theology produced by the ministers and teachers of both the Church of Scotland and the various dissenting groups in the period from 1815<sup>to</sup> 1835 and has found only two men who differed in any significant degree from the norm, one must conclude that Calvinism in Scotland in those years was, at least in regard to the atonement, just about what we see in Wardlaw.

Calvin affirms that "the righteousness of faith is a reconciliation with God, which consists solely in remission of sins."<sup>110</sup> He further states, in enlarging upon the meaning of justification:

" . . . it is evident, that we obtain justification before God, solely by the intervention of the righteousness of Christ. Which is equivalent to saying, that a man is righteous, not in himself, but because the righteousness of Christ is communicated to him by imputation; and this is a point which deserves an attentive consideration. For it supersedes that idle notion, that a man is justified by faith, because faith receives the Spirit of God by whom he is made righteous. . . for he must certainly be destitute of all righteousness of his own, who is taught to seek a righteousness out of himself. . . We see that our righteousness is not in ourselves, but in Christ; and that all our title to it, rests solely on our being partakers of Christ; for in possessing him, we possess all his riches with him."<sup>111</sup>

"... the faithful should conclude that they cannot hope for an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven on any other foundation, but because being ingrafted into the body of Christ, they are gratuitously accounted righteous. For with respect to justification, faith is a thing merely passive, bringing nothing of our own to conciliate the favour of God, but receiving what we need from Christ."<sup>112</sup>

How do we become "partakers of Christ;" how are we "ingrafted into the body of Christ?" In his treatment of the "three-fold office" of Christ, which has been called "the really characteristic Protestant doctrine of the work of Christ,"<sup>113</sup> Calvin gives a partial answer to these questions but it does not seem to be a final and definitive one. In his discussion of the priesthood of Christ, Calvin points out that Christ "by his holiness" renders us "acceptable to God."

"... by the sacrifice of his death he has abolished our guilt, and made satisfaction for our sins. . . there is no access to God, either for ourselves or our prayers, unless our priest sanctify us by taking away our sins, and obtain for us that grace from which we are excluded by the pollution of our vices and crimes. Hence it follows that he is an eternal intercessor, and that it is by his intervention we obtain favour with God. Hence proceeds not only confidence in prayer, but also tranquillity to the consciences of the faithful; while they recline in safety on the paternal indulgences of God, and are certainly persuaded, that he is pleased with whatever is consecrated to him, through the Mediator."<sup>114</sup>

We have said that this answer seems inconclusive because, satisfying as Calvin's conception of Christ as Mediator may be, wonderful as his explanation of the connection between the love

of God and our reconciliation to Him in Christ is,<sup>115</sup> we are yet left in doubt as to the means by which we are united with Christ or, to use Calvin's own expressive term, "ingrafted into his body." The best expression of these means is to be found in Calvin's discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit. He says

" . . . till our minds are fixed on the Spirit, Christ remains of no value to us; because we look on him as an object of cold speculation without us, and therefore at a great distance from us. But we know that he benefits none but those who have him for their "head" and "elder brother" and who have "put him on." This union alone renders his advent in the character of Saviour available to us. We learn the same truth from that sacred marriage, by which we are made flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, and therefore one with him. It is only by his Spirit that he unites himself with us; and by the grace and power of the same Spirit we are made his members. . . . But faith, being his principal work, is the object principally referred to in the most frequent expressions of his power and operation."<sup>116</sup>

Faith "is a steady and certain knowledge of the Divine benevolence towards us, which, being founded on the truth of the gratuitous promise in Christ, is both revealed to our minds, and confirmed to our hearts, by the Holy Spirit. . . ."<sup>117</sup>

Christ is He whom God has appointed as our High Priest, one who by the sacrifice of his death has abolished our guilt, made satisfaction for our sins and who can therefore intercede for us. With this Christ, we are united by the Holy Spirit. Thus reconciled to God, we have a steady and certain knowledge of his love for us. Since the love of God

appointed this Mediator for us and determined his sacrifice, we may, by faith, know that Christ died for us and for the remission of our sins.

It is only by faith, by the Holy Spirit, that we know Christ as God's free offering of love. This faith is the gift of God's free mercy, and this grace of God is illustrated "by this comperison, that he adopts not all promiscuously to the hope of salvation, but gives to some whet he refuses to others. . . ."118 The grace of God, in Calvin, is inseparably connected with his glory, his absolute sovereignty. ". . . God looks not at man, but derives his motive to favour him from his own goodness.. God's election of one man, therefore, while he rejects another, proceeds not from any respect of man, but solely from his own mercy; which may freely display and exert itself wherever and whenever it pleases. . . ."119

Now, let us see exactly what Calvin says about this election -- or, more specifically, about predestination. "Predestination, we call the eternal decree of God by which he hath determined in himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. . . Every man. . . is predestinated either to life or to death."120 "We assert that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined, both whom he would admit to salvation and whom he would condemn to destruction."121. How does Calvin

reconcile these statements with the "Universal invitations" in the Gospel, which caused Wardlaw and his opponents such difficulty? He says,

" . . . there is no discordance between these two things: God's having appointed from eternity on whom he will bestow his favour and exhibit his wrath, and his proclaiming salvation indiscriminately to all. . . . But why does he mention all? It is in order that the consciences of the faithful may enjoy the more secure satisfaction, seeing that there is no difference between sinners, provided they have faith; and, on the other hand, that the impious may not plead the want of an asylum to flee to from the bondage of sin, while they ungratefully reject that which is offered to them."<sup>122</sup>

The elect are "chosen in Christ;" his atonement is for them alone. " . . . Paul, having taught that we are chosen in Christ, adds at the same time, that we are accepted in him. How did God begin to favour those whom he had loved before the creation of the world, but by the manifestation which he made of his love, when he was reconciled by the blood of Christ?"<sup>123</sup>

Our conclusion is not that Calvin separated incarnation and atonement, certainly not that he separated atonement from its consequences. It is gross understatement to say that his thought, in this respect, is superior to that of Wardlaw; it is in a different realm entirely. What Calvin did do was to subordinate the whole of the work of Christ to the doctrine of election. To state it more justly, he subordinates



Redemption to Providence. The atonement is made for those whom God has predestined to salvation. Christ died for the elect. (Incidentally, Wardlaw demonstrated a measure of courageous independence at this point, for the whole weight of Calvin's authority was thus on the side of the "limited destination" view.)

We are not prepared to assert that all the corruptions of Calvin's doctrine of the atonement which developed in later Calvinism are due to this subordination of the atonement to election. There is certainly a good case to be made for a moderate statement of this thesis, if one grants that Calvin's doctrine of election suffered alteration when it was separated from the reigning idea of Providence and became interpreted as abstract divine decree. The debates concerning the nature of Christ's satisfaction -- whether it was an exact equivalent for the sins of the elect or of infinite value; the controversy over the character of God which demanded satisfaction -- whether it was that of offended party, judge or moral governor; the contention, so bitter in Wardlaw's time, over the extent of the atonement -- whether it was sufficient for all but intended for the elect, sufficient for all but "applied" to the elect or, as Calvin himself seemed to hold, sufficient for the elect only: all these concerns lead inevitably to a more and more legalistic view of the atonement.

Calvin avoided this path because he did not begin in

his thought of the work of Christ, with a doctrine of election. But his followers did begin with that doctrine. From Covetus to Wardlaw, they struggled with the seemingly hopeless contradiction: an all-sufficient sacrifice appointed for a limited purpose. One and all, in some way, separated atonement and its consequences -- believing thereby that they had solved the contradiction. The sacrifice of Christ was one thing; the salvation of sinners was another. The relationship existing between these two things was defined in many ways, but the vital element of continuity in intent and purpose was lost. One and all, in some way, separated the incarnation and the atonement. That separation is made inevitable, it would seem, when election is made to precede atonement.<sup>124</sup> For that participation in Christ, by which we are made to know that God loves us and has acted in love for our salvation, becomes less meaningful than a prior event to which this experience witnesses. It is by that prior event that our salvation is assured -- even though the actual means of salvation be union with Christ, our Saviour, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The prior event, of course, is our election. We are elected in Christ, it is true, but the election is by the grace of God -- a grace which is manifested not in the love which appoints a Saviour but in the arbitrary choice of those for whom the Saviour is appointed. This, we may say, is a corruption of Calvin's thought -- but who can deny that the

seeds of the corruption are present in the original? It is Calvinism with which we have had to deal in our study, and Calvinism, profound as it is, has made the atonement less than the full expression of the holy love of God which Christian faith apprehends it to be.

### The Atonement in the Thought of Luther

It has been said often enough that we do not have in Luther a systematic development of those fundamental insights which were able to bring about the Reformation. The faith of Luther is of such a character that it can neither be adequately expressed in, nor wholly confined by, any system. So indissolubly wedded to his own experience is this faith that all expression of it becomes, in some sense, a restatement of that experience and a deriving of new light and power from the revelation that broke the bondage of fear and sinfulness and united him to the loving God. This is to say that all theology, for Luther, is preaching of the Gospel and therefore, it is renewed contact with the God who justifies.

Such theology cannot be less valuable for the individual and the Christian church than that which is more systematic. If the experience of Luther has within it elements that are universal and if his faith is that which the Gospel truly demands and makes possible -- then his theology, unorganized as it may be, is invaluable for the light it throws upon our knowledge of God through Christ. It is our contention that

this is especially true when one regards the central doctrines of the Christian religion: the work of Christ, justification and reconciliation. For the experience of forgiveness is the central experience for Luther and it is knowledge and experience of forgiveness that we seek when we approach the Cross. It was this in Luther which led M'Leod Campbell to read him with such interest. He confesses:

"I have referred more than may meet the indulgence of some readers, though less than my own feeling of its value as a source of light would have inclined me to do, to the experience of deeply awakened sinners. The great reformer was such a one: and this part of his history has impressed a special character on his teaching. . . when Luther speaks of the law and the Gospel, of the righteousness of faith, it is not as a speculative theologian, ✓ reasoning out principles to their conclusions, and arranging the parts of a system in their due relations. He speaks of the law as what wrought with his spirit until it had brought him to the brink of despair. He speaks of the gospel as what had spoken peace and life to him, and by its revelation of Christ to his faith, had raised him as from hell to heaven."<sup>125</sup>

Campbell dwells with enthusiasm upon Luther's ability to see the Gospel as "being the revelation of what God is, rather than of what He calls for -- though therein implying what He calls for, and providing for its accomplishment."<sup>126</sup> The Gospel "reveals God to man" while the law reveals man to himself.<sup>127</sup> The law "may seem to reveal God who is love, yet is it rather a demand for love than a revelation of love"<sup>128</sup> while the gospel is the revelation of love. Only when love is thus revealed are we quickened to perform those things

which the law righteously demands. Certainly Campbell was correct in seeing this as the essence of Luther; and it is easy to see how Luther, so interpreted, seemed to deliver one from the legalism that had grown up in Calvinism, through the emphasis upon the eternal decree and the resulting separation of the work of Christ from its effects in the sinner.

But Campbell is forced to admit that Luther does not "offer much help towards a clear intellectual apprehension of (the nature of the atonement)." <sup>129</sup> He points out that for Luther, "Christ's bearing of our sins was not a mere imputation in the mind of another; it was a deep and painful reality in his own mind; and the victory of righteousness in Him was not such in respect of the award to righteousness by another, but a victory obtained by righteousness itself as a living divine might in Him." <sup>130</sup> This thought is not developed in Luther, but Campbell believes that it must have a crucial meaning, for unless these things be true, "Luther's marvelous teaching of justification by faith alone is left a super-structure without a foundation." <sup>131</sup> The task that Campbell sets himself is to develop the implications of Luther's thought, to describe the atonement in such a way that it will be clear how Christ's bearing of our sins is not only a revelation of the seriousness with which God regards them and the greatness of the love by which he delivers us from them -- but also a full



revelation of the Father Himself, the God whose relationship to His children is paternal and who, therefore, must in dealing with His Son reveal His own character. This, because character can be revealed only in living relationships. Campbell sees atonement as the content of revelation -- that by which we know God as He is. Surely, Luther spoke in this way too. It is not our purpose here to study Campbell's whole work and assess the measure of success or failure with which he accomplished his task. We have already dealt briefly with him as a source of help for criticism of Wardlaw.

Campbell found inspiration in Luther and made use of him as the foundation for his own modification of the theory of the atonement, as put forward by early and later Calvinists. It is clear that in so doing Campbell enriched his thought of the atonement and, while freeing it from much that is repulsive, added that most important feature -- a real understanding of the meaning of Christ's suffering and death as they reveal God, not simply in His will or justice, but in His essential being. Our own attempt to suggest the path which Christian thought must take in regard to the atonement is similarly dependent on Luther, but demands a closer examination of certain aspects of Luther's thought as they relate particularly to Calvin's handling of the same problems. For we are saying that Luther must provide the corrective for the Calvinist tendency to legalism. We are not maintaining, as Campbell seems to

have done, that Calvinist conceptions of the atonement must be completely rejected or at least so radically changed that they bear scant resemblance to their originals.

Böhmer, speaking of the examination of books which Luther studied in the monastery at Erfurt, and the Lectures on the Psalms given in 1513-15, says, "The problem as he put it was: How will I, the single individual, become absolutely certain of forgiveness of sin and thereby of the grace of God?"<sup>132</sup> The answer which came from the Occamists, from William of Occam to Biel (whose "Canon of the Mass" so profoundly influenced Luther in those years) was that "it is not absolution which brings about forgiveness of sins, but alone true contrition springing from the perfect love of God."<sup>133</sup> But how could one achieve this "true contrition?"

Luther was obsessed by the problem of predestination, for "he had before his mind's eye, the God of Occam, the God of absolute omnipotence and arbitrariness who damned and saved as he pleased."<sup>134</sup> There was for Luther, then, no assurance of forgiveness. Even the utmost spiritual striving and discipline could bring no assurance, for how could one be certain that his love of God was perfect? In fact, Luther feared and hated God -- the God who was arbitrary. How could he love God when he feared and hated him?

The answer that Luther finds in the Gospel, in Romans, in the faith which is the gift of God alone, not only puts

his feet on the path of reformation but provides the foundation for his whole thought of Christ. This can be seen in everything that he writes about Christ, as the revelation of God's forgiving love, but especially in the sermons. As we considered Calvin's position in regard to justification through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the work of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of faith, and election or predestination, we will look at Luther's thought on substantially the same problems -- though it is difficult to make the thought of the two men parallel at every point.

For Luther, it is Christ as the revelation of God's love who is the true Mediator. It is by faith in this Christ that we are justified. In one of the sermons, this remarkable passage is to be found: He has just spoken of the terror occasioned by meditation on the Passion of Christ and goes on:

"Now bestir yourself to the end: first, not to behold Christ's sufferings any longer, for they have already done their work and terrified you; but press through all difficulties and behold the friendly heart, how full of love it is toward you, which love constrained him to bear the heavy load of your conscience and your sin. Thus will your heart be loving and sweet toward him and the assurance of your faith be strengthened. Then ascend higher through the heart of Christ to the heart of God and see that Christ would not have been able to love you if God had not willed it in eternal love, to which Christ is obedient in his love toward you; there will you find the divine good father heart and, as Christ says, be thus drawn to the Father through

Christ. Then you will understand the saying of Christ in John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," etc. That means to know God aright, if we apprehend him not by his power and wisdom, which terrify us, but by his goodness and love; there our faith and confidence can stand immovable and man is truly thus born anew in God. . . "135

The underlined expressions are so similar to many by Campbell that one might almost substitute this excerpt from Luther for his own words -- yet I do not find this quotation any <sup>where</sup> place in Campbell.

The atonement and the incarnation are one in the divine love: "Christ is not only born unto us, but He is also given unto us."136 Luther wants to emphasize again and again that Christ is not to be known finally as a revelation of the wrath or the judgment of God but as proof of his unspeakable mercy: "Christ. . . is no Moses, no lawgiver, no tyrant, but a mediator for sins, a free giver of grace, righteousness and life, who gave himself not for our merits, holiness, righteousness, and godly life, but for our sins."137

The Holy Spirit teaches our hearts that this priceless gift of love is ours.

"It is a faithful saying that Christ has accomplished everything, has removed sin and overcome every enemy, so that through him we are lords over all things. But the treasure lies yet in one pile; it is not yet distributed nor invested. Consequently, if we are to possess it, the Holy Spirit must come and teach our hearts to believe and say: I, too, am one of those who are to have this treasure. . . Christ and all he has, who is given to us and proclaimed by the

Gospel: the Holy Spirit will give him into your heart so that he may be your own."<sup>138</sup>

By faith, we are united with Christ: "Faith. . . unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom. And by this mystery. . . Christ and the soul become one flesh."<sup>139</sup> By faith, we become in truth sons of God: "So great a thing is faith, such blessings does it bring us, such glorious sons of God does it make us. For we cannot be sons without inheriting our Father's goods."<sup>140</sup>

After his struggle in the monastery, it is not to be wondered at that Luther looked at the idea of predestination with a jaundiced eye. He affirms God's foreknowledge: "Nothing can be more plain to common sense than that this conclusion is certain, stable and true: -- if it be pre-established from the Scriptures that God neither errs nor is deceived; then what God foreknows must of necessity take place."<sup>141</sup> But -- "Why God sometimes, out of his divine counsels, wonderfully wise, unsearchable to human reason and understanding, has mercy on this man and hardens that, it beseems us not to enquire."<sup>142</sup> He once said what seems, to us, to be a true word on the subject of predestination: "When a man begins to discuss predestination, the temptation is like an inextinguishable fire: the more he disputes, the more he despairs. . . in trying to understand predestination, we forget God, we cease to praise and begin to blaspheme."<sup>143</sup>



The final and, for Luther, definitive word on this matter of predestination is the Word of God.

"Into these things God would not have us curiously inquire. He has not given us any special revelation in regard to them, but refers all men here to the words of the Gospel. By them they are to be guided. He would have them hear and learn the Gospel and believing in it they shall be saved. Therein have all the saints found comfort and assurance in regard to their election to eternal life; not in any special revelation in regard to their predestination, but in faith in Christ."<sup>144</sup>

There is one statement about the justice of God which must be included because it bears so directly on the problem which Wardlaw was concerned with: "Note this fact carefully, that when you find in Scriptures the word God's justice, it is not to be understood of the self-existing imminent justice of God. . . but, according to the usage of Holy Writ, it means the revealed grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ in us by means of which we are considered godly and righteous before him."<sup>145</sup>

### Conclusion

So satisfying is Luther's thought of the atonement as the full revelation of God's forgiving love that one might be tempted to reject in its favor all Calvinist elements of thought which emphasize the righteousness of God and the necessity for a satisfaction of His honor. We are not prepared to make this sacrifice, for a sacrifice it would be. There can be, in our judgment, no substitution for, and no diminishing

of, the emphasis that Luther puts upon the atonement as the content of revelation. In any scheme of Christian thought, atonement should be inseparably associated with God's self-revelation. Campbell is right in urging that we think of God as He has commanded that we think of Him: as the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Yet is it not fair to say that Luther gives no adequate conception of the atonement as that which determines forever the manner by which sin and evil are defeated and the holy will of God made supreme? To put it another way, Luther sees more deeply than anyone else the meaning of the personal experience of the Christian. We are saved solely by dependence upon the love of God. We know that love in Christ, who has died for us. Knowing beyond all doubt the sinfulness of our own natures, we are made bold to approach the God who has already approached us in Christ and rendered our sins impotent, insofar as they might constitute a barrier between ourselves and His righteousness.

But there is more to the Christian Gospel than the assurance that our sins are forgiven. This, Luther seems at times to forget. The Gospel contains the message that Sin itself is laid low, Death conquered and all the powers of darkness put to flight. Not only are we men to come, cleansed of our sins, into the presence of God, but the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our God and of His

Christ. This Christ who died upon the Cross for us and our salvation died also that His Lordship might be proclaimed over all things. The atonement must be not only personal but cosmic. (Words are singularly weak and inexpressive at this point and the thought which must be conveyed is distorted by the words we choose only because we can find no others.) Whatever may have been the errors in Calvinist thought, when attempts were made to say something about the way in which the atonement reveals God's eternal justice, His absolute sovereignty, and His unchanging purpose to inflict punishment for sin -- these things must be said. The atonement must not only relate sinful man to the suffering Christ; it must relate the victorious Saviour to the whole creation for which his victory is the final criterion of meaning and purpose.

When this is said, the reason for speaking of Luther as a "corrective" for Calvinist thought becomes apparent. It is the great strength of Calvinism that it seeks to give full expression to the glory of God, the Lordship of Christ, the sovereignty of Him with whom we have to do. The love which draws us to the Cross, in life-giving recognition that here our salvation was bought, is the love of the God who will not permit sin and evil to prevail in His Kingdom. The Christ who gave himself for us is the Christ who reigns triumphant over all the powers of evil. Our salvation is impossible apart from this final victory which has been

achieved but is not yet manifest to us who live in time and history.

It may well be, as Luther himself suggests, that there are things in the secret counsels of God which it is not right for us to concern ourselves with. This hope, this faith in God's final triumph over sin and death is partly hidden in God's secret purpose. But we cannot be content to leave the element of cosmic conflict and conquest entirely out of our faith, for as we have suggested, our own salvation is bound inextricably with the majestic action of God by which the whole of His creation is transformed. It is part of historic Christian faith that Christ, our advocate and Mediator, is also Christ our Judge and King.

Calvinism has wrestled with the atonement against this vast and clouded background. Often, the struggle has been productive of little light for Christian living. But, at its best, Calvinism has demonstrated an invincible belief in the righteous power of God manifested and mediated to us in Christ. It has maintained, often against impressive odds, its testimony for the sole power of God as initiator of our good, confirmer of our righteousness. If we were to depend upon Luther alone, we might have a deeply satisfying understanding of the love of God without sufficient evidence that this love is implemented by a power which alone can determine our destiny. Luther's doctrine of justification

is so great that we are prone to forget that its force depends perhaps too much upon a vivid experience of deliverance from bondage to the law unto the freedom of the love of Christ -- an experience which is essential but which, itself, must rest back upon the knowledge of the existence of a God who is supremely righteous as well as forgiving. We may be quite willing to say, with Luther, that we come to know the God of love only as Christ enters our hearts and we understand how greatly God has loved us to make this gift to us. We must also affirm that the God who so loves us and so gives His own Son for us has, by the same act, maintained His glory which demands equally the reprobation of sin and evil, and the salvation of His children.

Seeking to preserve both elements of the atonement, for both are surely present, we will take from Calvin and his followers the great insight which they give concerning the majesty of God, the unlimited seriousness of sin, the necessity for forgiveness which shall satisfy the claims of justice because behind these claims is the insistence that sin and evil be truly and wholly defeated and not simply overlooked. We shall see the atonement in its cosmic setting and affirm that, in Christ, God acts in holy love toward His creation -- demonstrating the true nature of sin and making effective its only remedy. We shall say with assurance that,



only in this way, only as God Himself took action, could the change be made in the whole situation of creation which makes possible the change in us from death to life.

We will take from Luther the great truth that it is in Christ, and particularly in Christ on the Cross, that we see God as He is. We will then understand the atonement, as Campbell understood it, to be the action of the Father in relation to the Son by which is revealed his Paternal character. We shall say that by adoption in Christ we become true sons of our Father, whose will it is that we shall live the life of sonship.

The stumbling-block will always be the matter of election and predestination. Can we escape by saying that it is not our province to explore the secret purposes of God, but rather to believe the Gospel, to rely wholly upon its promises and to preach it to all men? It seems to me that we can go one step further. We can say that God has, from the foundations of the whole creation, appointed Christ as our Mediator. The love of God is unchanging, and that love is expressed in example -- for He gave His own Son that we might know eternal life. It can be by no other way than surrender to His love that we shall come to Him. The Son who was sacrificed is also our brother. He is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. In Him, we all were brought into death and judgment and in his agony all our sins were atoned for.

Though in one sense his work is finished, in another sense, it is not completed. We know that he continually unites us to himself and thus presents us to God as those for whom he died and in whom his death has now issued in the resurrection which he also made for us. The great and humbling and mysterious fact about the atonement is that it was made once and for all, and yet is continuous in its meaning for us. To assert that God once ordained for all time what His love should accomplish -- whom it should save and whom not save, -- is somehow to corrupt and limit the mystery of atonement. It is, as we have indicated, to cut off the atonement from the whole purpose and character of God and give it the semblance of a transaction in time. But if the work of Christ be yet unfinished, if that relationship of what he has done for all time to what must be effected by it, is as continuous and as creative as the act of atonement itself -- then we may say that God seeks those whom He will save throughout all time.

Our preaching of Christ is not less important because Christ, the lamb of God, may save even those to whom the good news is not preached. Our knowledge of our sole dependence upon the mercy and love of God is not the less real and true because others do not, in their life, make such confession and yet are not thereby surely lost, beyond all hope. What God may finally make of the work which He has done, by

and in and through His Son, will remain hidden from us -- but what that work is, we know with thankful hearts and minds. The faith which it creates in us, by its very nature leads us to affirm that this work is universal, ultimate, finally invincible. What we, by faith, know of God in Christ, we proclaim in faith to the world. It was not only for us but for that world that He died and his resurrection is a dawn that is everywhere light. The God who thus gave His light to the world remains the source of these redeeming rays. The power and the glory is His. The love and the righteousness are His and He will make them effective. The atonement is universal as God is universal. It is His work, and the work is not finished. In this faith, we affirm what we know beyond all question to be true -- and we deny nothing which is God's alone to know. In this faith, we acknowledge our Saviour and proclaim him to be the Saviour of all mankind: "for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

and in and through His Son, will remain hidden from us -- but what that work is, we know with thankful hearts and minds. The faith which it creates in us, by its very nature leads us to affirm that this work is universal, ultimate, finally invincible. What we, by faith, know of God in Christ, we proclaim in faith to the world. It was not only for us but for that world that He died and his resurrection is a dawn that is everywhere light. The God who thus gave His light to the world remains the source of these redeeming rays. The power and the glory is His. The love and the righteousness are His and He will make them effective. The atonement is universal as God is universal. It is His work, and the work is not finished. In this faith, we affirm what we know beyond all question to be true -- and we deny nothing which is God's alone to know. In this faith, we acknowledge our Saviour and proclaim him to be the Saviour of all mankind: "for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

## CHAPTER VIII

## Ralph Wardlaw: Calvinist in Transition

## The Problem of the Minor Figure

The task of reconstructing and re-interpreting the work of a man whom both theological and ecclesiastical history classify as a minor figure, presents certain special problems and temptations. Because one is forced to concentrate so much of his effort on the reading and mastering of his writings, these works tend to assume a greater importance than they really possess. This is especially true when a man has written and published as many volumes as Ralph Wardlaw did. Perspective is gained when one begins to realize that many others in his day published almost as much and that little of their output deserves serious attention. An even greater blow at the tendency to magnify the importance of the minor figure is delivered by those who write on his important contemporaries and find it unnecessary to mention him at all, or are content to deal with him in a footnote. Wardlaw appears, thus, in footnotes more often than in the main body of the text.

The quite opposite temptation is encountered when the desire to magnify the subject's importance is crushed. The writer may easily become patronizing. Able to discern, from



the vantage point of a hundred years of history, great issues of the earlier day, he exposes the inadequacy of his subject's theological orientation, the mediocrity of his thought, the unimportance of much that was then considered vital. The work of a man of the early nineteenth century is judged by the standards of the twentieth century, and all that seemed impressive is shown to be untenable. The pastor is criticized for not being more prophetic, the teacher for not being more scholarly.

It might be possible to escape both these temptations, by being wholly noncommittal. One might attempt to write a study which would leave the reader with the conviction that the author had no interest whatever in his subject but had pursued his work purely as an experience in discipline. Surely, few men could write even a doctoral dissertation in such a coldly objective spirit. We have made this study of the work of Ralph Wardlaw not only because a dissertation needed to be written, but because Wardlaw was a Congregationalist in Scotland who wrote on the Doctrine of the Atonement. In the process of becoming acquainted with his life and work, the man himself has become very real to us.

A pastor for half a century in the same church; a teacher of theology who not only instructed but engaged in almost constant controversial writing on many subjects; a church statesman who built his own church soundly and well and helped to guide the fortunes of his denomination in difficult

days; a respected and venerated leader of the Christian forces of Scotland and the Independent church councils of Britain; a man of deep family feeling and sincere Christian piety: such a man was Ralph Wardlaw. His gifts were not those of a Thomas Chalmers or a M'Leod Campbell. ✓

His<sup>s</sup> thought was not strikingly original nor were his passions so fiery that the causes to which he gave himself became forever associated with his name. Two accusations against his character and integrity were made during his lifetime and the resulting investigations caused great interest at the time. In both cases, he was cleared and the scandals are of no more than academic interest today.<sup>1</sup> His loyalty to the church he had "gathered" in Glasgow is the more impressive when one discovers that he was repeatedly urged to accept teaching positions in England where he would have had the fellowship and support of a much larger body of Congregationalists. He was offered the Chair of Theology at Hoxton Academy and at Lancaster<sup>hire</sup> College<sup>M/c</sup>, the chair of X Moral Philosophy at London University, the Presidency and Theological Chair at Rotherham and a similar position at Spring Hill. His parishioners always urged him to stay and he was undoubtedly loathe<sup>d</sup> to leave Scotland, but it is apparent too that he felt a deep sense of responsibility to the Congregational Union and all the churches of which it was composed.

The major issues which he confronted during his ministry were those which we have examined in this study: the claims advanced by Socinianism (or Unitarianism) to be the bearer of uncorrupted Christian tradition; the question of the proper relationship between church and state; the nature and extent of the Atonement. It is characteristic that all these issues were discussed in his preaching. His pulpit, or his lecture platform in the church, was the place from which his proclamations went forth. His own people were the first to hear his views on Socinianism, on Voluntaryism, on the Atonement. The books that he wrote, the lectures which he later delivered, were largely re-workings of his sermons and church lectures. Because this was the case and because we have devoted so much attention to these important issues in our historical and theological study, it is only fair that brief comment be made concerning the preaching of Ralph Wardlaw. His sermons were not all controversial, nor were they always theological in the strict sense of the word.

#### Preacher

The sermons which were published were those preached for special occasions: funerals, ordinations, meetings of the London Missionary Society, etc. It may be assumed that these, and sermons occasioned by the Voluntary Controversy and other public events, were longer than the usual Sunday

sermons, but the latter were undoubtedly of ample length.

Wardlaw began to write his sermons in 1815 and preached from full written manuscript from that time forward.

The sermons on special occasions sometimes took two hours to deliver and probably he preached for an hour on Sunday morning. Protests at the length of the service are recorded. Nevertheless, he must have had a pleasing voice and a natural manner of speaking. One who heard him in 1824 writes,

"His prepossessing appearance and sweetly persuasive voice <sup>9.9</sup> have him an advantage. . . a completeness and perfection in his discourses considered as a whole. . . well entitled him to be regarded by the most competent judges as one of the first preachers of his age."<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing striking about these sermons, read over a century after their delivery. They are, as his appreciative hearer said, complete. They are evangelical and often reveal a warmer and more persuasive understanding of the Gospel than is revealed in the theological writings. The men and women who heard him for so many years in Glasgow were nourished by the great and life-giving content of the Christian faith. Whenever he took up controversial matters, he did so with firmness but with an impressive thoroughness and fairness toward the opposing position. He did not lack courage. He was an ardent supporter of the Emancipation movement at a time when it was exceedingly unpopular in some

quarters in Glasgow, because of the commercial interests involved. Some of Wardlaw's own relatives had investments in the West Indies and believed them to be threatened by the agitation for abolition of slavery. Many members of his congregation were of the same mind. Yet he helped to form the Glasgow anti-slavery Society in 1823 and on November 11, 1830 in Glasgow he moved a series of resolutions demanding emancipation. At that time he said, "There are two things of higher importance than (the pleasures of earthly friendship): an approving conscience and an approving God."<sup>3</sup> The report was spread abroad that he himself was deriving income from slave-holding property, (this was untrue) and he lost many friends and members of his congregation. On August 1, 1834, the day on which the Act of Emancipation took effect, he preached a sermon entitled, "The Jubilee." Shortly before his death he introduced Harriet Beecher Stowe in Glasgow.

His interest in the abolition of slavery was only one of the manifestations of a concern for what our contemporary Congregationalists would call "the social gospel." He gave a series of lectures on female prostitution at the request of 1100 citizens and 38 ministers of Glasgow. He was considerably interested in education and promoted the views of Joseph Lancaster. His labors on behalf of a free church have been alluded to in an earlier chapter. It was appropriate that, in honor of the fiftieth year of his pastorate in Glasgow, a large sum of money was raised to establish an educational



institution in a destitute part of the city to bear the name of "The Wardlaw Jubilee School and Mission House."

### Christian Educator

Wardlaw conducted his classes for ministerial students up to the last weeks of his life. Thus, for more than forty years, he served as the principal instructor for the Theological Academy which supplied ministers to the Congregational churches of Scotland. Three posthumously published volumes contain his theological lectures. He conveyed to his students large sections of contemporary and earlier writers in his own lectures. The theological system which he presented was Calvinism, modified in terms of the New England Theology and the more recent English Independent thought with which he found himself at most points in complete agreement. He dealt very briefly with Hume whose aim, he said, "was to involve everything in doubt, in the speculative and skeptical uncertainty in which his own mind at once shrouded and sported itself."<sup>4</sup> He touched upon the German writers in a similar way, denying any intention to "enter at large into the discussion of the atheistical systems of the 'great thinkers' of the German school," and admitting that he knew no German and could not waste his time learning it in order to consult the originals. His sources were Morell's "History of Modern Philosophy" and Hagenbach's "History of Doctrines." The men whom he lumped together as the expositors

of "atheistical systems" were Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel!<sup>5</sup> Here again, however, the tendency to condescend and adopt an attitude of superiority and critical judgment based upon contemporary theological knowledge must be avoided. The theological academies of those days were not graduate institutions. Theological discussion was not informed by an exact knowledge of contemporary developments in German philosophy, nor were the massive results of Kant's finished work widely known. Wardlaw, himself educated in an academy under the supervision of one instructor with a total period of 45 weeks for the course, was providing the students under his care with the most adequate instruction he could give them. He taught his students in Glasgow at the same time that Chalmers lectured to the students for the ministry of the Established Church (and later, the Free Church) in Edinburgh. Chalmers was a far more popular lecturer, but it is probably true that he made no more permanent contribution to theological thought than did Wardlaw. Neither of them <sup>as</sup> ~~were~~ particularly original, but both were preparing men for the ministry who would carry into their work a sense of the importance of dependence upon the Holy Scriptures and their interpretation according to the teachings of Reformed Churches.

Ralph Wardlaw, in 1833, inaugurated the Congregational Lectures in London, delivering a series of eight lectures

which were published under the title, "Christian Ethics." In these lectures, he examined a number of theories of moral obligation, beginning with that of Aristotle and ending with Hume and Butler. His argument against all of them is that they make the error of assuming the rectitude of human nature, putting upon a depraved mind the responsibility of examining a depraved nature to discover fixed principles of right and wrong. Even Butler, whose ethics is "the system of Zeno, baptized into Christ,"<sup>6</sup> speaks of human nature as a watch whose regulating and constitutive principle is conscience -- a watch which is "liable to be out of order." Wardlaw asserts that it is out of order -- "so radically disorganized that the grand original power which impelled all its movements has been broken and lost, and an unnatural power, the very opposite of it, has taken its place; so that it cannot be restored to the original harmony of its working except by the divine interposition of the Omnipotence that framed it."<sup>7</sup> It is not in man's fallen nature that we discover "the traces of the holy purity of his Creator" but "in the procedure towards the degenerate creature of the God whom his sins have offended; -- in his providence as interpreted by his word, and in the scheme of redemption as there exclusively revealed."<sup>8</sup>

These quotations are sufficient to indicate the problem Wardlaw confronted in his ethical teaching. One of the reviewers pointed to this problem in saying that in Wardlaw's

theory "we are deprived of all assurance respecting those fundamental truths which natural theology has been supposed to teach" while on the other hand, "if we be referred to faith in confirmation of their reality, still the evidences of that faith have no power of affecting our minds, except through the medium of those very powers whose authority has been previously thrown aside. . ."<sup>9</sup>

Wardlaw replies that reason itself is not totally depraved so that man cannot discover the grounds on which the truths of natural religion rest, but its operation is so affected by depravity that it can only conduct to false and dangerous conclusions. He does not adequately answer the reviewer, especially in the latter's second criticism. It seems to us to be a major weakness of Wardlaw's entire system that he nowhere presents a satisfactory doctrine of Scripture. He speaks always of the necessity of searching the Scriptures. He consistently asserts that the scheme of redemption is revealed in the Bible. Yet he never explains how the Bible may so speak its truth to the heart and soul of man that his own natural tendency to corrupt all truth will be overcome and the testimony of Scripture be accepted in all its purity and power.

#### Churchman

It is useful, after examining in close detail the thought of a man like Wardlaw, to attempt to see him in the

broadest possible perspective. Congregationalism which began in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries had advanced approximately half the way toward its present state at the time Wardlaw lived and wrote his volumes. What could be said to be most characteristic of the denomination? Most historians would answer in terms of the conception of the church which is dominant in Congregationalism. The church is the "gathered church." Ideally, it is a pure church, demanding of its members evidence of true spiritual conversion and a determination to keep themselves unspotted from the world. It is a church whose Lord is present "whenever two or three are gathered together in His name" for prayer, praise and the partaking of the Lord's Supper. This is a church which will react violently against attempts by the state to dominate its life and just as strongly against any form of ecclesiastical authoritarianism.

Wardlaw's loyalty to Congregationalism, conceived as a voluntary and pure (or sectarian) church form, was lifelong and was demonstrated in his choice of the denomination in 1801, his conduct as a pastor in the early years, his position during the Voluntary Controversy and his volume on "Congregational Independency" written in his later years. He manifested a concern not only for the independence of the local congregation but for the health and strength of the association of churches, which is Congregationalism's answer to the anarchical tendency ✓



inherent in its independency. He was one of the founders of the Congregational Union and rendered important service in establishing its financial security and representing its interests in England. He visited Ireland often in the interests of the Independent churches and gave much time and effort to the problems that so har~~r~~assed the churches there throughout most of his lifetime. The honors accorded him by his English colleagues indicate that he was, throughout most of his years in the pastorate, regarded as the ablest minister and theologian in the Congregational churches in Scotland. He was chosen to deliver the lectures on the Voluntary Church as opposed to Church Establishment; he preached often at the annual meetings of the London Missionary Society and was several times offered important academic posts in England. It may be inferred that his English friends admired his thoroughness, his balance, his ability to defend staunchly his own position without losing sight of the honesty and good intentions of his opponent. Involved often in controversy, he yet retained the respect and often the friendship of those whom he opposed. 7

#### Controversialist

In 1830 and the years that followed, a number of controversies agitated the religious life of Scotland. Two of them, the Voluntary Controversy and the debate concerning the nature and extent of the atonement and the character of

assurance and pardon, have been discussed at some length in earlier sections of this study. The discussion of slavery was intense at this time and the Apocrypha controversy, perhaps the bitterest of them all, had not yet died down. Finally, there was the question of the humanity of Christ, miracles, and the gift of tongues. In all of the debates and attacks and counter-attacks, Wardlaw played a prominent part. There is little temptation to revive these controversies in detail, especially that concerning the Apocrypha which Wardlaw himself described as a "painful and sickening one."<sup>10</sup> The British and Foreign Bible Society had published the Bible with the Apocryphal books, for distribution on the Continent and thus caused strong resentment among its constituency in Scotland. This action, repudiated by their members, was also withdrawn by the officers of the Society, but their repentance for it was not judged to be sufficient and the controversy reached its height of intensity when Scottish societies connected with the parent body voted to break relations. Wardlaw, determined in his opposition to the circulation of the Apocrypha, was willing to accept the apologies of the officers and trust them to act more circumspectly in the future. As one of the secretaries of the Glasgow Auxiliary, he was drawn into the dispute and forced to oppose his friend and co-secretary, Dr. Heugh.

His action in this controversy, painful because of the amount of heat engendered over so small an issue, is typical of Wardlaw's temperate attitude. In each of the controversies in which he engaged, he sought to state his convictions clearly and without compromise. But he sought also, not always successfully, to keep the discussion centered upon the main and important issues. He was not willing to enter into the name-calling that characterized so much of the Voluntary Controversy, but insisted that the men of the Established Church were fair-minded, able, devoted ministers who in this particular matter had not yet seen all the light that was revealed in the Scriptures and the ordinances of Christ. When the Disruption took place and those who had opposed Voluntaryism were united with it at least in opposition to the officially established Church, he warned his colleagues against thoughtless accusations of inconsistency and premature assumptions of complete agreement between Free Church men and Voluntaryists.<sup>11</sup> In the controversy on the atonement, he sought to define the great areas of agreement existing between himself and Marshall, for instance, and succeeded in proving to those not too intimately involved that there was no major issue of Christian faith involved.

He seems to have been unyielding and insistent upon the fulfillment of certain conditions fixed by him and his

supporters only in the case of the heretical tendencies discovered in 1844, first among students in the Academy and then among ministers in both the West and North of Scotland. This situation has been referred to briefly in the treatment of Morisonianism in the chapter on Atonement, for the views of the students were influenced by Morison. Though Wardlaw delivered a series of lectures intended to inform the students concerning the Calvinist interpretation of Divine influence in regeneration, the majority of them adhered to their views and were dismissed. In an attempt to counteract the heretical tendencies in the churches, the Glasgow churches entered into correspondence with the churches in Hamilton, Ardrossan, Belshill, Cambuslang, and Bridgeton. This correspondence was published when the Glasgow churches decided to withdraw fellowship from the accused churches. The other churches in the Union were asked whether they would support the action of the Glasgow churches and act in unison with them. They did not reply, for it seemed to them that the controversy had been unwisely entered into and no good could be done by continuing it and deepening the cleavage between the churches. Wardlaw's biographer who was minister of one of the churches that refused to act, states: "Churches were nominally involved in a dispute which, after all, was really a dispute between their pastors."<sup>12</sup> His argument, which seems eminently sound, is that the points

in question were those on which it was understood that forbearance would be exercised toward those within the churches who were unable to accept the Calvinist position. It is quite true, he said, that Congregational churches are Calvinist bodies, but the orthodoxy of their teaching must be maintained by examination of the ministers, not of individual church members. It would have been correct procedure had Dr. Wardlaw and his colleagues conferred with the erring ministers and, finding them persistent in error, had withdrawn ministerial fellowship from them. By corresponding with the churches, the majority of whose members understood little of the meaning of the discussion, and acting toward them, several good churches were lost from the denomination and it afterward appeared that many of their members did not hold the views imputed to them by their ministers.

This incident has significance because it represents one of the few major errors in strategy which can be counted against an astute and responsible church statesman. It is interesting that Wardlaw was concerned here for the maintenance of Calvinist orthodoxy and was led by his concern to initiate a type of disciplinary action, which, in one sense, denied the freedom of the churches themselves. It has always been  
 ? difficult for Congregationalism to strike the proper balance between the autonomy of the local church and the maintenance of certain established standards in faith and practise.



In the early years of Congregationalism in Scotland, Wardlaw seems to have been one of the moderates who believed that fellowship was more important than the maintenance of absolutely unanimous agreement within a single church, or between associated churches, on all matters of faith and order. There is no reason to suppose that he had altered his views radically, yet in the above-mentioned instance he appears to have believed that the maintenance of orthodoxy was more important than the continuance of fellowship. Undoubtedly, his own position as Theological Tutor made it difficult for him to take a calm and wholly objective point of view. He himself had been accused of abandoning Calvinism in his view of the atonement, and he was particularly anxious to prove that he not only held the Calvinist position in regard to the assurance of faith and divine influences in regeneration but was prepared to discipline those who had departed from it. There was no doubt in his mind that Congregationalism, in its interpretation of scriptures and its understanding of doctrine, was Calvinist -- however much it might disagree with Presbyterian forms of church government and theories of relationship to the secular authority.

#### Calvinist in Transition

The theological position which Wardlaw took was a middle-of-the-road position between the heresies of Morisonianism and Erskine's views of Universal Pardon, Yates' Socinianism

and the excesses of the Irvingites -- all the radical movements of his day on the one hand -- and extreme or "hyper-Calvinism" on the other. He felt in regard to the latter that it tortured the gospel and could not be accepted by one who made Scriptures the rule of faith, as he did. Because he was determined to find not only faith but the order of the church's life in the Bible, he could not be Calvinist in his view of the church and its relations to the state. Perhaps he did not perceive an inherent conflict between Calvinism and Congregationalism, but he certainly tried to modify Calvinism to fit the latter and in certain instances found it necessary to abandon the principles of Congregationalism in order to maintain Calvinism.

We have commented upon the lack of an adequate doctrine of Scripture in Wardlaw's thought and writing. He could have found such a doctrine in Calvin, but could he have adopted it wholly and remained a Congregationalist? So much of the strength of Congregationalism derives from an emphasis upon the New Testament that it is hard to believe that anyone could accept Calvin's great stress upon the equal value of both Old and New Testament and yet feel at home in a Congregational church. (This is not to beg the question of the early New England churches with their strong Calvinism, but it is interesting that a serious break with Calvinist doctrine came when the favored position in which the churches

stood was ended by the disestablishment of the Congregational churches.) Wardlaw believed in a church patterned after the primitive churches described in the New Testament.<sup>13</sup> When he discussed the atonement, he made little reference to the Old Testament, as is immediately apparent when his work is compared with that of Erskine. Though, in the Socinian Controversy, he made the whole Bible the basis of his Trinitarian argument and Old Testament as well as New the source of evidence for it, he encounters great difficulty in making some of his Old Testament texts support his argument. Yet, his emphasis upon the Scriptures as the body of revealed doctrine and divine ordinances, the only true source of the knowledge of God and his Providence, is certainly Calvinist.

In his "Friendly Letters to the Society of Friends," he criticizes their dependence upon the Spirit and the 'inner light' as the primary source of their knowledge of the revelation of God. "My rule," he states, "is the recorded intimations of the mind of the Spirit in the sacred Scriptures. . . the intimations of the Spirit to prophets and apostles. . ." <sup>14</sup> The operation of the Spirit, says Wardlaw, "does not consist in any direct communication of truth to the mind, independently of the existing revelation in the Holy Scriptures; but only in such a removal of the mind's natural blindness (a blindness arising from moral causes) as imparts a spiritual discernment

of the excellence, and suitableness, and glory of the truth there revealed."<sup>15</sup>

There is much of Calvin's literalism in Wardlaw, but it must be seriously doubted whether Wardlaw really understood Calvin's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, nor, as we have indicated, was he as much impressed by the importance of the Old Testament as a true Calvinist should be. For Calvin, the Bible is a book of divine ordinances. The written word is a guarantee against the distortion of truth that might come, were the truth not so authoritatively recorded. The testimony of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary in order that the eternal truth of Scripture may also be truth for the individual reader. This testimony, however, has no reference to possible amendment or re-interpretation of the written word but only to its acceptance by the reader. All distinction of levels of religious value, as between Old and New Testament for instance, are excluded by Calvin. For Luther, the Bible must be judged by a person who stands "in Christ"; in terms of the criteria given in Him. Calvin, impressed by the danger of individualistic interpretation of Scripture by enthusiasts, offers a more literal and legalistic approach.

Wardlaw, Calvinist and Congregationalist, appears to us to be drawn by both the strict Calvinist view of the Bible and the more liberal Congregational interpretation, influenced

by Luther and the later Protestant sects. There is a double qualification and weakening of his position by this tendency to veer between the two principles. In supporting the Calvinist interpretation of the authority Scriptures and the operation of the Holy Spirit, he appears to make the Holy Spirit independent of the Word in the sense that the former operates to "remove the mind's natural blindness" in order that the glory of the truth may be revealed. Calvin, however strongly he may have emphasized the literal acceptance of Scripture, associated the Holy Spirit with the written word in such a way that the Word becomes living truth for the individual believer. The Holy Spirit testifies to the truth of Scripture; it does not act simply as the preparatory agent but as the actual bearer of truth. Word and Spirit are inseparable.<sup>16</sup>

Wardlaw was in some sense separating the two, though not as completely as did the Friends. But when he did move toward another principle than that of Calvin, he did so with certain restraints which seem to invalidate much of what he has to say. Instead of allowing the supreme revelation of the mind and purpose of God in Christ to be the criterion for all of the Bible, he tried to reconcile all testimony to the nature of God by discovering a principle by which it could all be placed on one level of importance. His thought of the atonement is affected by this, as is his argument for the Trinity.



When Wardlaw opposed the students under his instruction, he fought for Calvinism. When, at the same time, he chose a "reconciling principle" which would harmonize seemingly conflicting Scriptural testimonies concerning atonement, he leaned heavily on a freedom of interpretation which Congregationalism derives not so much from Calvinism as from the Reformation sects. ✓

#### Modification or Reconstruction?

Wardlaw and his colleagues contributed greatly to the decline of Calvinism as the theological basis of Congregationalism, even though they would have denied any such purpose. For, instead of seeking to recover the original meaning of Calvin, they "modified" what they felt to be harsh, uncompromising and un-Scriptural. Their modifications were all in the nature of concessions made to the very enemies which Calvinism had opposed: Sobellianism and Arminianism, for example. R. W. Dale in his "History of English Congregationalism" makes this point in comparing the Savoy Declaration of Faith of 1658 and the "Declaration of the Principles of Faith and Order of the Congregational Body," accepted by the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1833. Wardlaw was on the sub-committee which, in 1833, revised the original statement prepared by the Rev. George Redford.

Dale says that these modified Calvinists "clung to the substance of the old faith, but the traditional and authoritative

definitions seemed too hard and uncompromising: they thought it possible to express the same truth in a form more tolerable by expressing it more vaguely. They did not know that their Calvinism was decaying, and that as yet they had found no other system that satisfied them."<sup>17</sup> This distinguished historian of Congregationalism does not tell us why "their Calvinism was decaying," nor whether that decay was inevitable or brought about by particular circumstances.

In Ralph Wardlaw, the decay of Calvinism was inevitable. In defending the orthodox faith, he abandons it. When he wrote his Discourses on the Socinian Controversy he said, in his Chapter "On the Test of Faith in Matters of Religion:" "What. . . is the proper province of Reason?. . . There are two points which we. . . ought. . . to employ our reason to determine. The first is, Whether the Scripture be a revelation from God: -- and when this has been satisfactorily settled, the second is, What is the true meaning of the various parts of this revelation?"<sup>18</sup> But Calvin said:

" . . . the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason. For as God alone is a sufficient witness of Himself in his own word, so also the Word will never gain credit in the hearts of men, till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the spirit. . . it (Scripture) is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason. . . Without this certainty, better and stronger than any human judgment, in vain will the authority of the scripture be either defended by arguments, or established by the consent of the Church or confirmed by any other supports. . ."<sup>19</sup>

Throughout his life, Wardlaw repeated the injunction "Search the Scriptures." He was never willing to argue from any other grounds than those provided in the pages of the Bible. Yet never did he come to grips with the fundamental problem which this position must face. He would not accept the right of a Church to interpret God's Word. He had little place for the authority of tradition and was not disposed to admit the right of John Calvin to stand as his authority. Had he read Calvin more carefully, he might have discovered that Protestantism not only rejects the authority of Church Councils and of tradition but affirms with tremendous power the authority of the Holy Spirit. It is by the Holy Spirit that the truth of the Scriptures is authenticated. It is by the Holy Spirit that the God who spoke is known to be the God who speaks. The "hyper-Calvinism" against which Wardlaw contended was a corruption of Calvin's doctrine at this point, as at many others. The literalist tendency, inherent in Calvin's own thought, was there fully expressed. The needed corrective, however, was not an abandonment of the truth Calvin is enunciating in his doctrine of Scripture authenticated by the Holy Spirit, not a modification of it, but a more complete affirmation of its significance and centrality in Christian faith. It is perhaps one of the greatest services which Congregationalism can render Protestantism that it maintain both the definiteness and objectivity of the

truth revealed in God's Word in the Bible, and the living Word by which and through which this truth is known to be divine revelation. That living Word of God is the Holy Spirit. Without its operation, faith may be corrupted to become legalism or abandoned in favor of a barren rationalism. Christian piety, without the power of the Holy Spirit, declines into religious moralism. He with whom we have to do ceases to be the living God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and becomes the Creator, the Governor or, in more recent days, some sort of "Principle of being." This is the decline not of Calvinism but of Christianity, and now, as in Wardlaw's time, it is to be prevented not by the modification of Calvinism's harsher doctrines or the correction of its errors but by the rediscovery of those great truths of Christian experience and faith which Calvinism seeks to express. We ought indeed to search the Scriptures, as Wardlaw said, but we must do so with the certainty that we "know no other Spirit than that who dwelt in, and spake by the apostles."<sup>20</sup> By this Spirit, our God is He who speaks, acts, reconciles and saves -- now and through all eternity.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Research on the life and writings of Ralph Wardlaw was started in Scotland but carried forward in the United States, when the coming of war in 1939 necessitated return to this country. <sup>usa</sup> The discovery of source material in the United States was a major factor in making possible the completion of the task. It seems worthwhile to review briefly the problems encountered and the help given in solving them by the Library of the Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Work was begun in the winter of 1938-39 in Edinburgh, on material in the New College Library, the Congregational Divinity College Library and the National Library of Scotland. A period spent in France early in 1939 yielded nothing of importance save an acquaintance with Möyse Amyraut, whose theory of "hypothetical universalism" in regard to redemption and the work of Christ bears a striking resemblance to Wardlaw's theory of "infinite sufficiency and limited efficiency" of the atonement. Three weeks at the Congregational Divinity College in London (New College) provided the opportunity for the examination of certain Wardlaw materials not available in Edinburgh, and Dr. Albert Peel, then Editor of the Congregational Quarterly, supplied some of Wardlaw's published volumes. In the late summer of 1939, several weeks were spent in the



National Library in Edinburgh, reading the work of McLeod Campbell. Three weeks after the outbreak of war the return to the United States on a freighter permitted the carrying of only a very few books: published volumes of Ralph Wardlaw.

Eight months spent in 1939-40 at Union Theological Seminary were devoted for the most part to study of the work of Jonathon Edwards. The Seminary Library at that time seemed to possess relatively little material on Wardlaw and his period. It was the more surprising, then, to discover on examining the catalogue in late 1945, that a good deal of material had apparently been acquired. Serious examination of these resources began in February, 1946.

Many of the books and pamphlets used in the writing of this dissertation belong to the Gillett Collection of the Union Theological Seminary Library. It was apparent, as this material began to emerge from the stacks of the Library, that much of it had not been used since it was deposited there. In some cases books had been presented by their owners with the marginal notes and underlinings intact. In other cases there was no evidence of the work ever having been read. In several cases, pages were uncut and it was a rare sensation to sit in New York, in 1946, cutting the pages of pamphlets published in Edinburgh in 1800. (One of these was the "Journal of a Tour Through the Northern Countries of Scotland and the Orkney Isles, in Autumn, 1797.")

Scotland in 1853.

Two books necessary for the writing of the dissertation were not to be found in the Union Seminary Library. One, the volume by Wardlaw on "Congregational Independency," was procured from the Congregational Library in Boston. The other was the volume published by the Congregational Union of Scotland in 1849 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the denomination. Entitled "The Jubilee Memorial of the Scottish Congregational Churches," it was listed in the catalogue but could not be located in the stacks. After the Chapter on the "Rise of Congregationalism" had been written with the use of original sources, this volume was located in a part of the stacks where it had been misplaced many years before.

The New York City Public Library supplied "Discourses and Services on occasion of the Death of the late Ralph Wardlaw, D.D." This pamphlet was bound in a collection of banquet programs. An interesting volume of letters entitled "Congregationalism Deserted by Dr. Wardlaw and Rev. Messrs. Alexander and Campbell, etc." was found there also. The New York Library owns several copies of the "Discourses on the Socinian Controversy," presented by various donors. This is one indication of the importance of the volume in the United States, at the time. Other volumes by Wardlaw were published in Toronto, New York (three publishing houses), Boston,

Scotland in 1853.

Two books necessary for the writing of the dissertation were not to be found in the Union Seminary Library. One, the volume by Wardlaw on "Congregational Independency," was procured from the Congregational Library in Boston. The other was the volume published by the Congregational Union of Scotland in 1849 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the denomination. Entitled "The Jubilee Memorial of the Scottish Congregational Churches," it was listed in the catalogue but could not be located in the stacks. After the Chapter on the "Rise of Congregationalism" had been written with the use of original sources, this volume was located in a part of the stacks where it had been misplaced many years before.

The New York City Public Library supplied "Discourses and Services on occasion of the Death of the late Ralph Wardlaw, D.D." This pamphlet was bound in a collection of banquet programs. An interesting volume of letters entitled "Congregationalism Deserted by Dr. Wardlaw and Rev. Messrs. Alexander and Campbell, etc." was found there also. The New York Library owns several copies of the "Discourses on the Socinian Controversy," presented by various donors. This is one indication of the importance of the volume in the United States, at the time. Other volumes by Wardlaw were published in Toronto, New York (three publishing houses), Boston,

Andover and Philadelphia.

It seems rather surprising that, despite the necessity, occasioned by the war, of doing much of the research for this dissertation in the United States, it was possible to examine every published work of Wardlaw's with the exception of a few sermons and essays, and some of the articles published by the "Missionary Magazine." The Library did not possess later copies of this Magazine, but it did have the issues in which the announcement of Wardlaw's Ordination was given and his first articles printed.

Only those publications are listed in the Bibliography which were available for study. Alexander's "Memoirs" of Wardlaw cite several essays, introductory chapters to works by their authors and lectures, which are not included for this reason.

The original source material on the beginnings of Congregationalism in Scotland is so plentiful in the Union Theological Seminary Library that I asked the Emeritus Librarian, Dr. Rockwell, what might be the explanation. He, a Congregationalist, replied that it was not that his predecessors in the Library were greatly interested in the Congregational churches but that they tried to acquire everything that referred to Scotland! For such loyalty to the land of Presbyterianism, a Congregational scholar can only be humbly grateful. It should be added that the material used in the preparation of this dissertation, though long in the

Union Library, was only recently catalogued.

A final note is an exceedingly personal one.

I became interested in Wardlaw as a possible subject for a dissertation because he was a Scotsman, a Congregationalist, and a writer on the Atonement. I did not seek to trace whatever records there might be of his long ministry in Glasgow, though that became a source of regret when it was necessary to leave Scotland, rather than remain a second year as I had fully expected to do. It was interesting to use his own copies of his published works, at the Congregational College Library in Edinburgh. It was not until I began to trace his relationship to the Erskines and had corresponded with my father concerning my discoveries about this period in Scottish church history, that I realized an unimportant but interesting fact. This was, that my subject and I possessed the same first name, not by chance but by design. Ralph Wardlaw, as I have indicated, was the grandson of James Fisher of the Secession Church. Fisher was the son-in-law of Ebenezer Erskine. Wardlaw's mother was proud of this lineage and named her son after the illustrious Ralph Erskine, Ebenezer's brother. My paternal grandparents were Scots from the vicinity of Dumfries. They did not meet until they had both emigrated to this country. In both of their homes, the "Gospel Sonnets" of Ralph Erskine were read aloud and greatly



admired. It was only natural that they should take the name of the Secession hero for one of their sons. My name was compounded from the names of two uncles: Ralph Erskine Hyslop and Logan Douglas Hyslop. I find it both interesting and characteristic that an American Congregationalist of the twentieth century and a Scottish Congregationalist of the nineteenth should thus be able to acknowledge their connection with a Seceder from the Church of Scotland who lived in the stormy days of the early eighteenth century.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE PUBLISHED WORKS OF RALPH WARDLAW

Christian Ethics, London, Jackson and Walford, 1844.

Congregational Independency, the Church Polity of the New Testament, Glasgow, James Maclehose, 1848.

Discourses on the Principal Points of the Socinian Controversy, Glasgow, 1814; Andover, Mark Newman, 1815.

Discourses on the Sabbath, Glasgow, A. Fullerton & Co., 1832.

Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, Glasgow, Maclehose, 1844.

A Dissertation on the Scriptural Authority, Nature and Uses of Infant Baptism, Glasgow, The University Press, 1825.

Essay on Mr. Joseph Lancaster's Improvements in Education: including an Abridged View of his Plan of Teaching; with a few Remarks on some of its Peculiar Advantages, Glasgow, R. Chapman, 1810.

Friendly letters to the Society of Friends on Some of Their Distinguishing Principles, Glasgow, A. Fullerton & Co., 1836.

Lectures on Ecclesiastes, 2 vol. Glasgow, A. Fullerton & Co., 1838.

Lectures on Female Prostitution, Glasgow, J. Maclehose, 1843..

The Life of Joseph and the Last Years of Jacob: a book for youth and age, Glasgow, 1845.

National Church Establishments Examined, London, Jackson and Walford, 1839.

On Miracles, Edinburgh, 1852.

A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship, Glasgow, Maurice Ogle, 1803.

Sermons, Edinburgh, A. Black, 1829.

Three Lectures on Romans iv. 9-25, Designed chiefly to illustrate the nature of the Abrahamic Covenant and its connection with infant baptism. With an Appendix on the mode of baptism. Glasgow, M. Ogle, 1807.

Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith: II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, Glasgow, Blackie, Fullarton & Co., 1830.

Unitarianism Incapable of Vindication: A Reply to the Rev. James Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, Glasgow, A. & J. Duncan, 1816, Andover, Mark Newman, 1817.

#### Posthumous

Lectures on the Book of Proverbs -- Three volumes, Ed. by J. S. Wardlaw, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1869.

Lectures on the Epistle of James, Ed. by J.S. Wardlaw, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1869.

Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans - Three volumes, Ed. by J. S. Wardlaw, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1869.

Lectures on the Prophecies of Zechariah, Ed. by J. S. Wardlaw, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1869.

Systematic Theology - Three volumes, Ed. by James R. Campbell, Edinburgh, A. and C. Black, 1856-1857.

#### Introductory Essays and Memoirs

Introductory essay to: A Collection of the Promises of Scripture by Samuel Clark, Glasgow, W. Collins, 1831.

Discourses by R. S. McAll with a Sketch of his Life by Ralph Wardlaw, 1840.

An Essay on Benevolent Associations for the Relief of the Poor, Glasgow, Young Gallie & Co., 1818.

Lectures on Christian Theology by George Payne, Two volumes, Reminiscences by Ralph Wardlaw, 1850.

Memoir of the Rev. John Reid: Comprising Incidents of the Bellary Mission from 1830 to 1840, Glasgow, 1845.

Introductory Essay to: Practical Discourses on Regeneration,  
by Philips Doddridge, Glasgow, W. Collins, 1829.

#### Lectures and Controversial Pamphlets

Civil Establishments of Christianity Tried by Their Only  
Authoritative Test, the Word of God, Glasgow, A. Fullarton  
& Co., 1833.

Exposure Exposed, a statement of facts relative to West George  
St. Chapel, in refutation of the falsehood of Anglo-Scotus,  
Glasgow, 1834.

The Importance of the Voluntary Church Controversy and the  
Spirit and manner in which it ought to be Conducted,  
London Evangelical Church Association, 1840.

The Headship of Christ, as Affected by National Church  
Establishments, Glasgow, J. Maclehose, 1847.

The Principle of Voluntaryism as Distinguished from the  
Principle of a State Establishment of Religion,  
London, 1844.

Report of a lecture against total abstinence delivered by  
the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, Glasgow, Temperance Union, 1842.

The Sentiments and Conduct of Dissenters Towards Their non-  
intrusion Brethren in the Established Church, Edinburgh,  
1843.

Speech delivered at meeting of the opponents of church rates  
in England and additional endowments in Scotland, held  
in the Rev. Dr. Heugh's church, Glasgow, January 19,  
1837, Glasgow, J. Symington & Co., 1837.

Speech delivered at the Glasgow Anti-Slavery Meeting (from  
the Glasgow Chronicle, November 17, 1830), Glasgow, 1830.

#### Sermons

The following published Sermons by Ralph Wardlaw were  
contained in collections of printed sermons in the Union  
Theological Seminary Library, New York City, classified in  
these categories:

Special Occasions	Subjects
Anniversary	Baptism
Funeral	Church and State
Miscellaneous	Communion
Missionary	Slavery
Ordination	Voluntary Controversy

The Sermons are listed chronologically and include some of those published in the volume of Sermons included in the list of published works. Each of these sermons was separately published in the year indicated.

Christian Mercy - 1810

A Bishop Must be Apt to Teach - 1811

The Doctrine of a Particular Providence - 1812

The Scriptural Unity of the Churches of Christ Illustrated and Recommended - 1817

The Contemplation of Heathen Idolatry - 1818

The Duty of Imitating Departed Worth - 1818

The Truth, Nature, and Universality of the Gospel - 1818

Discourse at the Ordination of Archibald Jack - 1820

The Duty of Submission to Civil Government - 1820

Purposes of Divine Mercy to the Seed of Abraham - 1820

On the Death of My Father - 1821

The Vanity of the Earthly Hopes of Man - 1821

Love to Christ - 1823

The Early Success of the Gospel - 1823

Divine Dissuasive to the Young Against the Enticement of Sinners - 1824

Man Responsible for his Beliefs, Two Sermons, 1825

Christ, the First Fruits - 1828



On Worldly Mindedness - 1831

The Agency of God in Human Calamities - 1832

The Voice of the Spirit to the Churches - 1832

The Nature of Christian Zeal - 1833

The Jubilee: a sermon. . . preached on August 1, 1834,  
the memorable day of Negro Emancipation in the British  
Colonies - 1834

Death Conquered - 1838

The Minister of the Gospel the Servant of Christ - 1840

The Missionary's Confession and the Missionary's Charge - 1841

The Revival of Religion - 1841

The End of Living and the Gain of Dying - 1841

The Principles of Christian Communion - 1842

The Final Triumph of God's Faithful Servants - 1843

The End, the Time of Divine Interpretation - 1843

Remains of Alexander Campbell - 1843

One only Way of Salvation - 1843

Funeral Sermon for Dr. Heugh - 1846

The Immutability of Christ - 1846

Sermon to London Missionary Society on Luke XII:49, 50 - 1850

The Call to Repentance - 1851

What is Death? - 1851

The Christian's Final Home - 1852

The Stringency of the Law Shutting up to the Grace of the  
Gospel - 1852

Sources for the Life and Work of Ralph Wardlaw

Alexander, William Lindsay, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., Edinburgh, A. & C. Black, 1856.

Discourses and Services on Occasion of the Death of the Late Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, D. D., Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1854.

Kinniburgh, Robert, Fathers of Independency in Scotland, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1851.

(Lockhart, John) Anglo-Scotus, A Further Exposure of the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, Newcastle upon Tyne, M. A. Richardson, 1834.

A New Exposure of the Reverend Leaders of the Voluntary Church Associations - containing a reply to Dr. Wardlaw's "Exposure Exposed," Newcastle upon Tyne, M. A. Richardson, 1834.

MacMoline, Andrew, Congregationalism deserted by Dr. Wardlaw and Rev. Messrs. Alexander and Campbell in the case of the Independent Church, Dumfries, Edinburgh, C. Ziegler, 1843.

Missionary Magazine, Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1800-1805.

Porter, S. T., A Letter to the Church Meeting in West George St. Chapel, Glasgow (bound with) Vindication of Their Pastor and Themselves from the Charge of the Rev. S. T. Porter. . . including Dr. Wardlaw's own statement, By the Deacons of West George St. Congregational Church.

Smith, John, Ed., Our Scottish Clergy, Three Volumes, (Wardlaw: Vol. I, pp. 57-66), Edinburgh, 1848.

CHAPTER I

Baillie, Robert, The Letters and Journals, Ed. by the Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1841-1842, Three volumes.

Belcher, Joseph, Memoir of Robert and James Haldane, New York, American Tract Society, 1858.

Bennett, James, Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. David Bogue, D.D., London, Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1827.

- Boston, Thomas, Notes by, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, in Two Parts, Pittsburgh, William Paxton, 1830.
- Butler, D., John Wesley & George Whitefield in Scotland, New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1899.
- Dale, R. W., History of English Congregationalism, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1907.
- Dexter, Henry Martyn, The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years as Seen in its Literature, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1880.
- Erskine, Ralph, Faith No Fancy, or a Treatise on Mental Images, Philadelphia, 1805.
- Haldane, Alexander, Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his Brother, James Alexander Haldane, New York, Robert Carter & Brothers, 1854.
- Haldane, James A., A View of the Social Worship and Ordinances Observed by the First Christians, Edinburgh, 1805.
- Haldane, James A., Journal of a Tour Through the Northern Countries of Scotland and the Orkney Isles, Edinburgh, 1798.
- Haldane, Robert, Address to the Public, Concerning Political Opinions and Plans Lately Adopted to Promote Religion in Scotland, Edinburgh, Ritchie, 1800.
- Henderson, Henry F., The Religious Controversies of Scotland, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1905.
- Jones, William, Memoirs of the Rev. Rowland Hill, M. A., London, Henry G. Bohn, 1853. R
- Logan, Robert, The United Free Church: An Historical Review, Edinburgh, MacNiven and Wallace, 1906.
- Macfarlan, D., The Revivals of the Eighteenth Century, particularly of Cambuslang, With three sermons by the Rev. George Whitefield, taken in shorthand, Edinburgh and London, John Johnstone, 1849.
- Matheson, Mrs. Jessy J., A Memoir of Greville Ewing by his Daughter, London, John Snow, 1843.
- McKerrow, John, History of the Secession Church, Edinburgh and Glasgow, A. Fullarton & Co., 1841, Two Volumes.

*Complete*

Mitchell, Gavin, Remarks upon a Publication entitled "Journal of a Tour, etc." Aberdeen, 1799.

Struthers, Gavin, The History of the Rise of the Relief Church, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1848.

Thomson, Andrew, Historical Sketch of the Origin of the Secession Church, (Printed with The History of the Relief Church, Gavin Struthers), Edinburgh, A. Fullarton & Co., 1848.

Tyerman, Luke, The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, New York, Randolph & Co., Two volumes, 1877.

Waddington, John, Congregational History, London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1878.

Watson, John, The Scot of the Eighteenth Century, New York, A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1907.

Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842, Edinburgh, W. Ritchie, Junior, 1843.

The Jubilee Lectures, Volume I, London, Haddon & Stoughton, 1882.

The Jubilee Memorial of the Scottish Congregational Churches, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton, 1849.

## CHAPTER II

Campbell, George, Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, Philadelphia, B. B. Hopkins & Co., 1807.

McKerrow, John, History of the Secession Church, Two volumes.

Schaff, Phillip, The Creeds of Christendom, New York, Harper, 1882.

*Currier's Hist. - Creeds & Confessions*

## CHAPTER III

Ballantine, William, Observations on Confessions of Faith of Human Composition, etc., Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1804.

Brown, John, Vindication of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government as Professed in the Standards of the Church of Scotland, (Letters to Mr. Innes), Edinburgh, H. Inglis, 1805.

Carson, Alexander, Reasons for Separating from the General Synod of Ulster, Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1806.

Glas, John, Works, Four volumes, Edinburgh, Alexander Donaldson, 1761.

Haldane, James A., The Celebration of the Lord's Supper Every Lord's Day Shewn to be the Duty and the Privilege of every Christian Church, Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1802.

Haldane, James A., Reasons of a Change of Sentiment and Practise on the Subject of Baptism, Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1809.

Haldane, James A., A View of the Social Worship and Ordinances Observed by the First Christians, Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1805.

Haldane, Robert, Letters to Mr. Ewing respecting the Tabernacle at Glasgow, etc., Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1809.

Haldane, Robert, Remarks on a Late Publication by Mr. Greville Ewing, Entitled Facts & Documents, etc., Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1809.

Moore, George C., The Life of Alexander Carson, LL.D., New York, Edward H. Fletcher, 1851.

Randal, Glas, Erskine, Haldane, The Celebration of the Lord's Supper Every Lord's Day, Shewn to be the Duty and the Privilege of Every Christian Church, Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1802.

Congregational Union of Scotland, Annual Report #17, (for the year, 1829).

#### CHAPTER IV

Barling, John, A Review of Trinitarianism, London, Chapman Brothers, 1847.

Belsham, Thomas, A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine Concerning the Person of Christ, London, 1817.

Bethune-Baker, James Franklin, An Introduction to the early History of Christian Doctrine to the time of the Council of Chalcedon, London, Methuen and Co., 1903.



Brown, John, An Examination of the Sentiments of Socinians and Arians, Edinburgh, Waugh and Innes, 1827.

Strictures on Mr. Yates's Vindication of Unitarianism, in reply to Mr. Wardlaw's discourses on the Socinian Controversy, Glasgow, A. & J. M. Duncan, 1815.

Cooke, George Willis, Unitarianism in America, Boston, American Unitarian Assn., 1902.

Cory, David Munroe, Faustus Socinus, Boston, the Beacon Press, 1932.

Dwight, Timothy, Travels in New England and New York -- Four Volumes, New Haven, 1821-22.

Fuller, Andrew, The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Examined and Compared, Philadelphia, 1796.

Moberly, Robert C., Atonement and Personality, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1901.

Morse, James King, Jedidiah Morse, a Champion of New England Orthodoxy, New York, Columbia University Press, 1939.

Robinson, H. Wheeler, The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, New York, Herpers, 1928.

(Socinians) Socinianism Triumphant: or A Copy of a letter from the Socinians in Scotland to their Brothers in Poland. . . Edinburgh, 1790.

Socinus, Faustus, Opera omnia in duos tomos distincta: Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant. . . Irenopoli, 1656.

Sprague, W. B., Life of Jedidiah Morse, New York, 1874.

Walker, Williston, Ten New England Leaders, New York, Silver, Burdett & Co., 1901.

Woods, Leonard, History of Andover Theological Seminary, Boston, James R. Osgood and Co., 1885.

Works - Five volumes, Boston, John P. Jewett and Co., 1851.

Yates, James, The Grounds of Unitarian Dissent, A Sermon Preached November 15th, 1812 at the Opening of the Chapel in Union-Place, Glasgow, Glasgow, 1812.

Yates, James, A Vindication of Unitarianism in reply to Mr. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, Glasgow, 1818.

## CHAPTER V

Ballantyne, Rev. John (Autographed copy indicates author as Ballantyne, Minister of the United Secession Church, Stonehaven.) A Comparison of Established and Dissenting Churches by a Dissenter, Edinburgh, David Brown, (given by Watt as 1824).

Chalmers, Thomas, Lectures on the Establishment and Extension of National Churches, delivered in London from April 25 to May 12, 1838, Glasgow, William Collins, 1838.

Cruickshank, James, The Church of Scotland Vindicates from the Cavils of Dissenters, With a postscript containing strictures on Dr. Wardlaw's late sermon on Civil Establishments of Christianity, Edinburgh, W. Whytcor Co., 1833.

Esdaile, James, The Spirit, Principles and Reasoning of the Voluntaries Exposed, Perth, J. Dewar, 1834.

Forman, Charles W., Questions of Church and State in the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, Prize Essay, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1943.

Gladstone, W. E., The State in its Relations with the Church, Two volumes, London, John Murray, 1841.

Henderson, G. P., Heritage: A Study of the Disruption, Edinburgh and London, Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1943.

Jamieson, John, The Testimony of Scripture Against Civil Establishments of Christianity, Perth, 1835.

Marshall, Andrew, Ecclesiastical Establishments Considered (Sermon preached in Greyfriars Church, Glasgow, April 9, 1829) Glasgow, M. Lochhead, 1829.

A Letter to the Rev. Andrew Thomson, D.D., Glasgow, M. Lochhead, 1829.

Mathieson, William Law, Church and Reform in Scotland: A History from 1797 to 1843, Glasgow, James Maclehose and Sons, 1916.

Miall, Edward, Views of the Voluntary Principle, London, Avlott and Jones, 1845.

Noel, Baptist Wriothsesley, Essay on the Union of Church and State, London, James Nisbet and Co., 1849.

Watt, Archibald, Church and State in Scotland from the Disruption, Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1927.

Watt, Hugh, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1943.

Wayland, Francis, The Limitations of Human Responsibility, Boston, Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1838.

Pamphlets on the Voluntary Controversy, A Collection of sermons and addresses by Wardlaw, Marshall, Spence, Fleming, McCrie, Jamieson, Beverley, 1829-1835.

Proceedings of the First Anti-State-Church Conference, held in London, April 30, May 1 and 2, 1844, London, 1844.

Report of the Speeches Delivered at the Public Meeting of the Voluntary Church Association, held in Broughton Place Church on Tuesday, the 29th January, 1833, Edinburgh, John Wardlaw, 1833.

Standard Essays on State-Churches, London, Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control, 1867.

Tracts on Church and State: A collection of addresses, essays, public letters, etc. on the question, published in London, 1840-50.

## CHAPTER VI - VII

Amyraldi, Mosis, Considerationes in Caput VII Epistolae Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos, Salmurii, Joh. Lesnerium, 1648.

\_\_\_\_\_, Dissertationes theologicae quatuor (De Oeconomia Trium Personarum in operibus divinis - De jure Dei in creaturas - Doctrinae de gratia universali defensio - Doctrinae de gratia particulari, ut a Calvino explicatur, defensio), Salmurii, I. Desbordes, 1645.

Amyraut, Möyse, Apoligie pour Ceux de la Religion, Saumur, Isaac Desbordes, 1647.

- Amyraut, Moÿse, Exposition Des Chap. VI at VIII de L'Epistre de St. Paul aux Romains et Du XV de la Premiere Aux Corinthiens, Charenton, Louis Vendosme, 1659.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Traitte des religions contre ceux qui les estimet toutes indifferentes, Saumur, J. Lesnier, 1652.
- Boehmer, Heinrich, Luther in Light of Recent Research (trans. by Carl Huth, Jr.), New York, Christian Herald, 1916.
- Brown, John, Theological Tracts, Selected and Original, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton, 1854.
- Calvin, John, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, New York, S. Heustis, 1819.
- Campbell, J. McLeod, The Nature of the Atonement, London, Macmillan & Co., 1886.
- Edwards, Jonathon (the younger) The Necessity of Atonement and the Consistency Between that and Free Grace, in Forgiveness, Three discourses, Portland, J. M'Kown, 1811.
- Erskine, Thomas, The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel: In Three Essays, Boston, Crocker and Brewster, 1828.
- The Brazen Serpent: or, Life Coming Through Death, Edinburgh, Waugh and Innes, 1831.
- Etudes de Theologie et D'Histoire par Les Professeurs de la Faculte de Theologie Protestante de Paris, Paris, 1901.
- Franks, Robert S., A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ, Two volumes, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.
- Fuller, Andrew, The Atonement of Christ and the Justification of the Sinner, ed. by Joseph Belcher, New York, American Tract Society.
- Gilbert, Joseph, The Christian Atonement, London, Jackson and Walford, 1852. Memoir of the Life and Writings of Edward Williams, London, Francis Westley, 1825.
- Grotius, Hugo, A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ, Against Faustus Socinus, trans. by Frank Hugh Foster, Andover, Warren F. Draper, 1869.
- Haldane, James A., The Doctrine of the Atonement, With Strictures on the Recent Publications of Drs. Wardlaw and Jenkyn, Edinburgh, William Whyte and Co., 1845.



Lorimer, John G., Historical Sketch of the Protestant Church of France, Philadelphia, 1842.

Luther, Martin, Works: The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther, based on the Kaiser Chronological edition with reference to the Erlangen and Walch editions, ed. by John Nicholas Lenker, (Referred to in footnotes as Lenker Ed.), Minneapolis, Minn., Lutherans in All Lands Co., 1903.

Works, Philadelphia, A. J. Holman, 1915-32.

The Table-Talk or Familiar Discourses of Martin Luther (trans. by Wm. Hazlitt), London, David Bogue, 1848.

Conversations, Selections translated and edited by Preserved Smith and H. P. Gallinger, Boston, Pilgrim Press, 1915.

A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (trans. by Erasmus Middleton), London, B. Blake, 1836. a/

MacLeod, John, Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation, Edinburgh, 1943.

Martin, Hugh, The Atonement: In its Relations to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of our Lord, Philadelphia, Smith, English and Co., 1871.

Polhill, Edward, The Divine Will Considered in the Eternal Decrees and Holy Execution of Them (with an introduction by John Owen), London, Henry Everden, 1673.

Ritschl, Albrecht, A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, trans. by John S. Black, Edinburgh, Lamonston and Douglas, 1872.

Socinus, Faustus, Opera omnia in duos tomos distincta: Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant. . . . Irenopoli, 1656.

Tulloch, John, Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the 19th Century, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893.

The Christian Doctrine of Sin, New York, Scribner, Armstrong and Co., 1876.



## CHAPTER VIII

Haldane, Robert, Review of the Conduct of the Directors of the British and Foreign Bible Society Relative to the Apocrypha, Edinburgh, A. Allardin & Co., 1825.

Peel, Albert, These Hundred Years: A History of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1831-1931, London, Con'l Union, 1931.

Rutherford, Alexander, Strictures on the Entire Correspondence Between the Four Congregational Churches, etc., Edinburgh, A. Ziegler, 1845.

Stoughton, John, Recollections of a Long Life, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1894.

## PAMPHLETS

Correspondence between the four Congregational Churches in Glasgow and the Churches in Hamilton, Ardrossan, Belshill, Cambuslang, and Bridgeton, 1844.

Pamphlets on the "Apocrypha Controversy," Glasgow, 1827.

Balmer, Robert and Brown, John, Statements on Certain Doctrinal Points made October 5, 1843, before the United Associate Synod, at their request, Edinburgh, Wm. Oliphant and Sons, 1844. vi/

Cuthbert, Alexander, Statement of the late Rev. Dr. Balmer examined, etc., Edinburgh, 1845.

(Expelled Students) The Expulsion of Nine Students from the Glasgow Theological Academy... by the Expelled Students, Glasgow, George Gailie, 1844.

Fuller, Andrew, Universal Atonement Refuted, Edinburgh, 1845.

Heugh, Hugh, Irenicum: an inquiry into the real amount of the differences in the Synod of the Secession Church on the Atonement, Glasgow, David Robertson, 1845.

MacMillan, Samuel, Twenty Arguments against the doctrine of Universal Atonement as preached and published by Dr. Wardlaw and others, Edinburgh, Delrymple, 1845.

Marshall, Andrew, Remarks on the pamphlet entitled "Statements, etc." Edinburgh, 1845.

Marshall, William, Present State of Doctrine in the United Secession Church, Edinburgh, 1845.

Morison, James, The Extent of the Propitiation; or, the question, For Whom Did Christ Die? answered. London, Thomas Ward and Co., 1842.

Robertson, Andrew, A Brief Sketch of the History of the Atonement Controversy, Edinburgh, Wm. Oliphant & Sons, 1845.

The Continuation of a Brief Sketch, etc., Edinburgh, 1845.

## APPENDIX

Translation of Amyraut's Exposition of Romans viii: 28-30.

Amyraut, Möyse, Exposition Des Chap. VI et VIII de L'Epistre de St. Paul aux Romains. . . pp. 79-94.

28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.
29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
30. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them also he justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Verse 28. I have already said that the expression "we know" is used to designate the certainty of the thing of which the Apostle speaks and the profound conviction that he has concerning it. Accordingly, I shall only refer here to the fact that St. Paul expresses himself in the plural in order that he may make it quite clear that he speaks of something that is not his alone but is delivered to all of the Faithful because of the truth and power of Christ.

With regard to the concept cuneprei which we translate "work together," it signifies "cooperate," and the syllable co- is not superfluous here as in other instances. For the Apostle wants to say that all kinds of happenings and even the utmost afflictions contribute each their own part to the salvation of those elected by God. The word "for the good of"

! correct

(20)

means that; and it is in contrast to "to the detriment of," which would be the result of these great afflictions if the spirit of God did not sustain us in them. In that case, the unbearable hardship of our condition would make us lose desire and abandon hope for our inheritance. The connection of this verse with the preceding (verse 22) is henceforth quite clear; it is to give notice that the Faithful are subject to extreme afflictions which will reduce them to the state described above, a state which was capable of frightening them because of the knowledge which they have of their own infirmity, had they not been forearmed to meet them by the assurance of a good outcome. Thus, the Apostle tells them here that much as it is necessary that they should fear, these afflictions will not make them abandon the hope of their salvation but will, on the contrary, contribute to their faith and serve to create in them perseverance. The reason for this is that it is God who dispenses these afflictions because, having irrevocably decided to lead them to salvation, he uses in His own time the means which He deems necessary.

"With those," he says, "who are chosen according to his designed purpose." I said, in regard to verse 4 that the words, "who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit" were used by way of transition. Here I say the same. For the Apostle, having promised to the Faithful who prove their faith by a true sanctification, the resurrection of their bodies and the enjoyment of a heavenly inheritance,

then mentions the condition on which they may obtain these things: to know the Cross, the weight of which he has represented as being insupportable. And finally, having assured them that this (burden of afflictions: the weight of the cross they must carry) will not hinder them from arriving at their destination and that it will even serve to lead them there, he desires to reveal to them the foundation on which he bases the most advantageous promises.

What I put before you here, he says, is incredible for the flesh because most certainly if there were only the flesh, it would be impossible for it. There is too much frailty and instability in the flesh, so that one cannot rely upon it in a situation where unshakable consistency is needed. It is of course true that I added that "for them who love God" all things "work together for good." If love is vigorous and has so great an object it can make one decide to sustain much hardship for him whom one loves. But even that is not yet the thing on which I base the certainty of your salvation and your perseverance in faith amidst such great afflictions. This love of God is really not so great in anyone that, if he were left to himself and to his own resources and actions, "death and the great waters of persecution could not extinguish it." Those whose perseverance I here guarantee are those who are called according to the fixed purpose of God and whose certain salvation consequently depends upon their eternal election. For what we allude to here: "fixed purpose,"



means a finished (or formed) resolution.

It is true that this same expression is used with aptness concerning men in whose motivating thoughts one can observe the following progression: In the first place, they think about the action and whilst reasons pro and con counterbalance themselves, they remain in irresolution. When the reasons for deciding one way begin to show a little more weight than those for the other course, they give a tendency to the soul on that side, but this is not yet a resolution. But when finally the reasons carry him away absolutely to one side, the understanding and the will become determined without reservation and this the philosophers call pre-election or purpose, as this word was formerly understood in our language, in order that they may signify what we now call resolution.

However, in God there is nothing similar to these consultations which bear the nature of the human in irresoluteness and doubt of what will be decided. In regard to the inclination which causes man to lean more toward one thing than another there is indeed in God something related which the Prophet expresses in these words, "I do not desire the death of the sinner but I desire his conversion" and St. Paul expresses it in these words, "God wishes that all men be saved and arrive at knowledge of the truth." But this does not derive from any hesitation in His deliberations nor from

the pain of decision. He proceeds according to His own virtues and particularly on the basis of what the Holy Scripture calls in Him, "the love which He bears toward man." With regard to what we called the "fixed purpose" in God: it is a fixed resolution which varies the less in Him than in us because He is unchangeable in His nature, because He has foreseen and foreordained all things so that nothing new can transpire which would make Him change His mind, and because He is infinitely powerful to execute that which He has resolved. Thus, to be "called [upon] according to [this purpose]" means to be led to communion with Christ and to hope for salvation in Him by ways and means in accord with this resolution. So much is this the case that God was not content with an external revelation. Such a revelation would have had no efficacy whatever. He has acted so powerfully upon the understanding of him whom He wished thus to call that the revealed (Christ) made a very profound impression which the continuation of this same action makes absolutely irremovable.

Verse 29. Human nature can be considered in three stages: before the fall; after the fall but before God has made any distinction between those who participate in it; and finally with regard to the distinction which it has pleased God to make. The first stage is not considered here, because it is not relevant to the economy of causes of our salvation. In the second stage, all men have to be considered as absolutely

equal despite all consideration of the corruption of their nature as well as the reprobation that is its consequence. When God considered them in this stage, the conception which he formed within Himself was one of absolute equality and uniformity. For in His infallible understanding, one object or several objects which resemble each other produce the same effect. Nevertheless, among these men so similar it pleased God to create some distinction, for which one can find no reason that does not derive from His pure will. This distinction the Apostle seeks to indicate by the word, "foreknowledge"; for by saying that there were some whom God foreknew, he hints sufficiently that there are others whom he did not. This word is composed of the word "knowledge" and of a syllable which emphasizes the fact that this knowledge must be considered in terms of a motive which He might have had beforehand. Knowledge means in the first place an act of the understanding in which an object is conceived and an image of it formed. But in another sense, it stands for an act of will and desire where that which understands loves what it knew. Thus at the end of the first Psalm, it is said that God knows "the ~~voice~~ of the righteous": in other words, that He loves and approves it. Now here, this concept (knowledge) cannot have the first meaning because if only knowledge in this sense were meant, there could be no differentiation. The truth is that all men

*Voie = voice*

are, through all eternity, equally known to God. Thus the meaning of knowledge here must be -- the affection which God bore toward those of whom it is said that "He knew them." With regard to the syllable "pre" -- in other words, "before" -- it necessarily means either that God foresaw in those something which invited His love or else that He has absolutely informed them in advance of His love without having found in them any impulsive or antecedent cause. The first, as we said before, cannot have happened because we have already assumed that all are equally corrupt and equally subject to the malediction of God. Accordingly, the Apostle must here designate a love which gives advance notice, definite and comprehensive, to those whom it embraces. Thus, He loved some and did not love others though in comparing them one would be able to find no reason for this distinction, the cause of which must consequently be assigned wholly to His pure will. However, all love of God is characterized by a certain action which He wants to exercise in relation to the person whom He loves. Thus, as He loved some and thus distinguished them from others, He must have resolved to do in those what He does not do in the others. Certainly one cannot better know the counsels of God than by the effect which they produce. Then, as some on the one hand believe and others do not believe, the action toward which His love inclines and by which it is determined is the faith which he desired to give

to some by calling them efficaciously and not to give to others but to leave them to themselves. Those, then, whom God foreknew are those to whom He determined to give the faith.

On this assumption, it is not difficult to explain how He predestines them to be made in conformity with the image of His Son. For it is faith which introduces us to communion with the Son and faith which enables us to share His spirit as fully as the human nature by adoption is capable of sharing it. What then was more reasonable than to make us in conformity with him so that as we share in some way his spirit, we share also the things which depend on it. As thus by various afflictions he entered the glory above, so we had to be predestined to enter by the same way. And when St. Paul says, predestined, he means destination by means of a definite counsel and a determined resolution of the same force as that which we translate "fixed purpose." For neither of these concepts has more force than the other. That which may be understood in the verse: "that he might be the first-born of many brothers," is added only to explain and sustain what he said before. He sustains it when he calls us brothers of Christ, for this implies that we must have been of the same status as he. He explains it when he calls him the first-born, in order that one may not think that in this conformity of status the Lord Jesus would have no superiority.



Verse 30. In the preceding verses, St. Paul explained the causes for our salvation which lie in the counsels of God: in this verse he demonstrates the effects which manifest themselves in our persons. The first effect is the Calling, which comes as I said before as a consequence of pre-knowledge and predestination. Now I have already indicated that there are two kinds of Calling; one of them consisting of the simple exterior representation of Christ. The other, in addition to the presentation of Christ, consists in some virtue which penetrates and lets Christ come in with great effect. Here we do not deal with the first because it is wholly ineffective due to the corruption of human understanding and the resistance thus put against it. We deal with the second which overcomes this resistance so that the fixed purpose of God and His predestination are effected.

The second effect is Justification which comes necessarily as a consequence of the other. For Calling produces faith, of which we do not speak here for two reasons. The first is that the Apostle here intends to speak only of that which God does and not of the actions of man. Thus, it is we who believe; it is not God who believes in us and in spite of God's furnishing us the power by which we believe, faith is an act which proceeds directly from our thinking. The second reason is, that in speaking of "effectual calling," it may be assumed that he speaks sufficiently of faith, for faith is found

universally wherever this calling extends. Accordingly when faith is thus assumed, Justification follows as a consequence of it as it is promised, "He who believes will be saved; he who believes will not be judged," and <sup>?condemned</sup> similarly in other phrases. For he who believes is introduced into the communion of Christ in such a manner that he has him as his chief and is himself one of his members. Thus, as the sufferings of Christ are judged to be those of the entire body, the satisfaction rendered by our Lord to the justice of our God is imputed to all the members as if they had all suffered themselves. And that is why it is said that we are all "baptized into his death," the baptism being for us a cup of that Communion which we have with the death of Christ.

The third effect is Glorification, concerning which one can demand two things: first -- why he does not speak of Sanctification which necessarily seems to come between Justification and Glorification. The second is why he expresses himself in the past tense as though speaking of something which had already happened. Now then, with regard to the first of these two questions, one can answer two things: One is, that which I have already mentioned regarding faith, namely, that the Apostle proposes to speak of nothing save that which God does directly and by Himself. Now our sanctification cannot come about without our intervention.

For God is not holy in us; it is we who must be holy. For this reason the Apostle who never admonishes us to call ourselves nor to justify ourselves nor to glorify ourselves nevertheless admonishes us powerfully to be holy as well as to believe and to call our members to be instruments of justice in relation to God's will. The other reason is that he did not want to give rise to the thought that the right to obtain glory can be founded in anything other than justification. For it is very true, as we said before, that there is some connection between sanctification and glorification, in that God uses the one to give us the other. But the right to glorification is founded solely upon the satisfaction of Christ by which we obtain remission of our sins.

As far as the second question is concerned, it can be answered in two words: namely, that the things which must inevitably occur and which have irrevocably determined causes, though they have still to take place, are treated as already having happened. For this is the manner of the Word of God and the speech of His Spirit, in which all such things appear to be present.

# FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER I

1. Dexter, Henry Martyn, The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years as Seen in its Literature, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1880, pp. 76-77.
2. Baillie, Robert, The Letters and Journals, Ed. by the Bennatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1841-1842, Vol. II, p. 110.
3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 110.
4. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 111.
5. Baillie, Robert, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 111.
6. Gles, John, Works, Vol. I, p. 152.
7. Watson, John, The Scot of the Eighteenth Century, New York, A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1907, p. 35.
8. Dr. Russell of Dundee in App. A of Memoirs of Greville Ewing, pp. 622-23.
9. Acts of the General Assembly: Sess. 2, Oct. 17, 1690, p. 222.
10. Boston, Thomas, The Marrow of Modern Divinity; Written about 1650 supposedly by Edward Fisher of England, the "Marrow" was discovered about 1720 by Thomas Boston of Ettrick. A new edition was then published, edited by Hog of Carnock. Thomas Boston supplied the notes for the edition which was available in the Union Library.
11. Ibid., pp. 72, 97, 138.
12. McKerrow, John, History of the Secession Church, Edinburgh and Glasgow, A. Fullarton & Co., 1841, Vol. I, p. 64.
13. Alexander, William Lindsay, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., Edinburgh, A. & C. Black, 1856, p. 3.
14. "The Messrs. Erskine and their adherents have appointed a public fast to humble themselves, among other things, for my being received in Scotland, and for the delusion, as they term it, at Cambuslang and other places, and all this because I would not consent to preach only for them, till I had light into, and could take the Solemn League and Covenant." (Quoted from Tyerman's Life of George Whitefield, Vol. II, pp. 22, 23.)

15. Jones, William, Memoirs of the Rev. <sup>R</sup>Howland Hill, M.A., London, Henry G. Bohn, 1853, p. 74-5.
16. Jones, William, op. cit., p. 150.
17. Haldane, Alexander, Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his Brother, James Alexander Haldane, New York, Robert Carter & Bros., 1854, p. 72.
18. Ibid., p. 72.
19. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 77.
20. Ibid., p. 82.
21. Haldane, Robert, Address to the Public, Concerning Political Opinions and Plans Lately Adopted to Promote Religion in Scotland, Edinburgh, Ritchie, 1800, pp. 13-14.
22. Bennett, James, Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. David Bogue, D.D., London, Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1827, p. 137.
23. Bennett, James, op. cit., p. 153.
24. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 95.
25. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 96.
26. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 120.
27. Ibid., p. 139.
28. Haldane, James A., Journal of a Tour Through the Northern Countries of Scotland and the Orkney Isles, Edinburgh, 1798, pp. 38-9.
29. Haldane, James A., Journal of a Tour, etc., p. 40.
30. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 179.
31. Haldane, James A., Journal of a Tour, etc., p. 43.
32. Ibid., p. 93.
33. Waddington, John, Congregational History, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1878, pp. 92-93. Vol 4/
34. Waddington, John, op. cit., p. 93.
35. Ibid., p. 93, Vol. 4.



36. Waddington, John, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 94.
37. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
38. Waddington, John, op. cit., p. 95.
39. Ibid., p. 96.
40. Waddington, John, op. cit., [Vol. IV,] p. 97.
41. (Charles Simeon) Invited to Scotland first in 1796 by Dr. Walter Buchanan, Simeon arrived in Edinburgh at the close of the Assembly. He desired to take a "short tour of pleasure in the Highlands" and he joined James Haldane and his wife at Airthrey. Haldane travelled in the Highlands with Simeon for three weeks, leaving him in Glasgow. During this trip, Simeon distributed copies of a tract, "The Friendly Advice." This was the first public distribution of tracts in Scotland, though the Edinburgh Tract Society had been formed by John Campbell for this purpose. (Memoirs of the Haldanes, pp. 128-36.)
42. Haldane, Robert, Address to the Public, Concerning Political Opinions and Plans Lately Adopted to Promote Religion in Scotland, Edinburgh, Ritchie, 1800, p. 71.
43. (Independent ministers from England) "James Bennett of Romsey, Edward Parsons of Leeds, James Boden of Sheffield, John Griffin of Portsea, Joseph Slatterie of Chatham, Robert Simpson of Hoxton, Thomas Taylor of Ossett, and George Burder, all Congregational ministers, were amongst the 'Tabernacle Supplies'," John Waddington, op. cit., pp. 101-102.
44. Kinniburgh, R., Fathers of Independency in Scotland, p. 462-3.
45. Haldane, Robert, Address to the Public, etc., p. 72-3.
46. Greville Ewing later prevailed upon Haldane to eliminate Bogue as the instructor and place him in charge. The first class began its study in Edinburgh in January of 1799 and moved to Glasgow in May when Ewing began to preach there in the Circus. In December, 1800, these students completed their studies and were sent out to preach. Succeeding classes were under the care of Innes and others, for Ewing was no longer connected with the enterprise after the year 1802. The entire support of the educational program, including the students' room and board and textbooks, was carried by Haldane. The course covered two years and included English grammar and rhetoric, elementary Greek and Hebrew and systematic theology. It was far from adequate but many men continued their study after leaving the academy. From its founding in 1799 until it closed in December, 1808, this theological academy sent out 300 preachers.

47. Haldane, Robert, Address to the Public, etc., pp. 81-2.
48. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 218.
49. The first Church, as we have seen, was George St. Chapel, Aberdeen. Haldane may have been the first minister as the George St. Chapel had not apparently been able to call a full-time minister.
50. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 224.
51. Haldane, Alexander, Memoirs of the Lives, etc., p. 203.
52. Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842, Edinburgh, W. Ritchie, Junior, 1843, p. 871.
53. Ibid., p. 872.
54. Ibid., p. 872.
55. Jones, William, op. cit., p. 161.
56. Haldane, Alexander, Memoirs of the Lives, etc., pp. 203-4.
57. Ibid., p. 321.

## CHAPTER II

1. Alexander, W. L., Memoirs of Ralph Wardlaw, p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
4. Ibid., p. 9.
5. Discourses by R. S. McAll with a Sketch of his Life, 1840, p. iv.
6. McKerrow, J., op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 789-92.
7. Schaff, Phillip, Creeds of Christendom, Vol. 3, p. 653 (Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 23, par. 3.)
8. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., p. 38.
9. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., pp. 38-39.

10. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., pp. 45-46.
11. Campbell, George, Lectures in Ecclesiastical History, Philadelphia, B. B. Hopkins and Co., p. 40.
12. Ibid., p. 47.
13. When he wrote his book on "Congregational Independency" 47 years later, he quoted Dr. Campbell and this particular work with approval. (See pp. 28, 78)

### CHAPTER III

1. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., p. 73.
2. Ibid., pp. 73-4.
3. Dexter, H. M., op. cit., p. 97.
4. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 322.
5. Dale, R. W., History of English Congregationalism, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1907, p. 135.
6. Ibid., p. 135.
7. Haldane, James, Letter to the Church Assembling for Worship in the Tabernacle, Edinburgh, March 26, 1802, p. 120.
8. Ibid., p. 121.
9. Ibid., p. 127.
10. Ibid., p. 134.
11. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 322.
12. Memoirs of Greville Ewing, p. 235.
13. Ibid., p. 238.
14. Ibid., p. 238.
15. Ibid., p. 238-39.
16. Haldane, James, View of Social Worship, p. 35-36.
17. Ibid., p. 375.

18. Ibid., p. 383.
19. Ibid., p. 225 ff.
20. Ibid., p. 225-30.
21. Ibid., p. 230.
22. The Jubilee Memorial of the Scottish Congregational Churches, Edinburgh, A. Fullarton, 1849, p. 90.
23. Alexander, William Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 89-90.
24. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
25. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 325.
26. Ibid., p. 325.
27. Haldane, James, Reasons of a Change of Sentiment and Practice on the Subject of Baptism, Edinburgh, J. Ritchie, 1809.
28. Ibid., p. 91.
29. Ibid., p. 92.
30. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., pp. 112-113.
31. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 327.
32. Haldane, Alexander, op. cit., p. 326-27.
33. Jubilee Memorial, p. 91.
34. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
35. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., p. 118.
36. Matheson, Jessy, op. cit., p. 392.
37. Congregational Union of Scotland, Annual Report, No. 17.

## CHAPTER IV

1. Alexander's Memoirs of Ralph Wardlaw, p. 149.
2. Ibid., p. 150.
3. Ibid., pp. 154-55.
4. Ibid., p. 155.
5. Ibid., p. 156.
6. Ibid., p. 163.
7. Yates, James, The Grounds of Unitarian Dissent, p. 6.
8. Ibid., p. 10.
9. Ibid., p. 12.
10. Ibid., p. 13.
11. Ibid., p. 14.
12. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
13. Ibid., p. 14.
14. Ibid., p. 16.
15. Ibid., p. 16.
16. Ibid., p. 18.
17. Ibid., p. 22.
18. Ibid., p. 23.
19. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
20. Ibid., p. 24.
21. Ibid., p. 33.
22. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
23. Ibid., pp. 36-39.
24. Ibid., p. 40.



25. Ibid., p. 40.
26. Ibid., p. 41.
27. Ibid., p. 43.
28. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
29. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
30. A pamphlet printed in 1790, "Socinianism Triumphant; or, A Copy of a Letter from the Socinians in Scotland to their brethren in Poland," recounts the way in which Socinianism has begun to gain a foot-hold in Scotland, even in the face of the determined opposition of the Established Church ("... the diligence and zeal of Calvin's sons, in defending the common faith, and strengthening the prejudices of their admirers, have greatly lessened our success," p. 11). The letter closes with what was apparently a familiar strain of prophecy among the Scottish Unitarians: "... it is easy to conclude... that the Calvinistic creed, now in use here, shall soon be exchanged for the Socinian. . . Can methods so admirably adapted to promote a revolution of religious sentiments fail of success? especially when the most learned, respectable and venerable characters in the church. . . when the nobles of the land almost to a man -- when the most eloquent and respectable of our lawyers and judges -- when the most promising of the youth, whether they are directing their course to law, physic, or divinity -- when the magistrates and counsellors of some of the boroughs -- when the most judicious of the common people, nay, when the vulgar themselves, are flocking in thousands to the camp of Socinus. . . Exult then, ye sons of Socinus, in every part of his vast dominions; for the old, unfeeling desire of heresy-hunting is now no more in Scotland, and the total extirpation of the Calvinists is fast approaching. Hail the approaching era when that mawkish breed, of French extraction, shall no more be seen in this happy island. . ." pp. 26-27.
31. Yates, it would seem, represented rather well the teachings of his master, Fausto Paolo Soggioli (Socinus), 1539-1604. Modern Unitarianism, at least in the United States, has almost wholly abandoned any reference to the supernatural. Socinus sought to construct an intellectual and rational system of Christian doctrine on a supernatural basis. He asserted the necessity and fact of divine revelation; maintained that Scriptures are its authoritative record

## 31 (Continued)

- and declared that the reason is the sole and final arbiter of truth. Socinus' chief attack upon orthodox doctrine, the "de Jesu Christo Servatore" is treated briefly in the discussion of the Grotian theory of the atonement. In his emphasis on reason, his rejection of Calvinist views of the Atonement, and his view of Christ as moral teacher rather than Saviour, Yates was a true Socinian.
32. Yates, James, The Grounds of Unitarian Dissent, pp. 18-20.
33. Ibid., pp. 26-33.
34. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
35. Ibid., p. 42.
36. Ibid., p. 47.
37. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, Preface, p. ix.
38. Ibid., Preface, p. ix.
39. Ibid., p. 157.
40. Ibid., p. 158.
41. Ibid., p. 170.
42. Ibid., p. 171.
43. Ibid., p. 176 ff.
44. Ibid., p. 11.
45. Ibid., pp. 18-25.
46. Ibid., p. 34.
47. Ibid., p. 44.
48. The controversy with Yates elicited no further statements regarding the Atonement and we defer full consideration of Wardlaw's position to the later Chapter on the Atonement.
49. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, p. 334.
50. Ibid., p. 296.

51. Ibid., p. 303.
52. Ibid., p. 345.
53. Ibid., p. 158.
54. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 15.
55. Ibid., p. 16.
56. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, p. 157.
57. Ibid., p. 8.
58. Ibid., p. 8.
59. See Chapter VIII for further discussion of Wardlaw's attitude toward the use of reason in the interpretation of Scriptures.
60. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, pp. 25-38.
61. Ibid., p. 26.
62. Ibid., p. 32.
63. Ibid., p. 33.
64. Ibid., p. 141.
65. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 94.
66. Ibid., p. 95.
67. Ibid., p. 95.
68. Ibid., p. 95.
69. This is one of several instances where Wardlaw emends the accepted translation of a text and thereby strengthens his argument concerning another text. This would seem to be rather irresponsible exposition save for the fact that he always has plausible grounds for the changes he makes. This particular change would not be supported by many translators today, (however,
70. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 136.
71. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 88.

72. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 143.
73. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 97.
74. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 146.
75. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, pp. 16-18.
76. Ibid., Disc. IX, pp. 267-69.
77. Ibid., pp. 266-67.
78. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, pp. 147-48.
79. Ibid., pp. 148-49.
80. Ibid., p. 149.
81. Ibid., p. 152.
82. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 101.
83. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 147.
84. Calvin Institutes: I xi. 16, p. 97.
85. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 258.
86. Ibid., p. 261.
87. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, pp. 34-35.
88. Ibid., p. 36.
89. Works, Vol. 5, p. 19.
90. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 183.
91. Ibid., pp. 183-84.
92. Ibid., pp. 159-161.
93. Ibid., p. 184.
94. Ibid., pp. 184-85.
95. Ibid., p. 185.

96. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, pp. 273-74.
97. Ibid., p. 289.
98. Ibid., p. 289.
99. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 247.
100. Ibid., p. 250.
101. Ibid., p. 250.
102. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, p. 44.
103. Ibid., p. 275.
104. Ibid., p. 275.
105. Ibid., p. 279.
106. Yates, James, Vindication of Unitarianism, pp. 124-25.
107. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 66.
108. Ibid., p. 67.
109. Ibid., p. 67.
110. Ibid., p. 67.
111. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, p. 22.
112. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, pp. 70-71.
113. Ibid., pp. 67-68.
114. Moberly, Atonement and Personality, p. 154.
115. Robinson, H. Wheeler, The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit, p. 254.
116. History of Christian Doctrine, p. 234. *Bottoms Review*
117. Institutes, p. 90.



118. Ibid., p. 90.
119. Ibid., p. 92.
120. Institutes, p. 98.
121. Ibid., p. 104.
122. Wardlaw's Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, p. 294.  
This sentence and others quoted from Yates and Sherlock is typical of the extreme length and involved construction of far too much of the writing of the day.
123. Wardlaw's Reply to Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism, p. 341.
124. Ibid., p. 340.
125. The copy of this edition in the Union Theological Seminary Library is a handsome volume. It bears on its title page, below the name and city of residence of the author, the information that the text is "from the first Glasgow Edition." The place of publication is Andover. The significance of this will be immediately apparent.
126. Alexander's Memoirs of Ralph Wardlaw, pp. 151-52.
127. Ibid., p. 151.
128. ". . . in literis bonis, praesentim Sacris, plurimam  
+ collocasse operam, et scriptis suis theologicis, Ecclesiam  
/? Christianam non solum in patria, sed etiam in his regionibus  
occidentalibus, et ad errorem refellendum, et ad veritatem  
confermandam maxime adjuvisse" (portion of Diploma  
citation), p. 515.
129. Dr. Woods corresponded with Wardlaw through his life and his indebtedness to his Scottish friend will be shown in this review. Woods later wrote an introductory essay to the American edition of Wardlaw's "Christian Ethics."
130. Morse, James King, Jedidiah Morse, a Champion of New England Orthodoxy, p. 17.
131. Sprague, W. B., Life of Jedidiah Morse, p. 2.
132. These were lectures he had given to classes in a girl's school at New Haven while carrying on his theological studies.
133. Dwight, Timothy, Travels in New England and New York, Vol. I, p. 511.

134. Walker, Williston, Ten New England Leaders, p. 377.
135. Sprague, W. B., Life of Jedidiah Morse, p. 52.
136. See "Address," pp. 128 ff.
137. This was a year of crisis, for after nearly two years in which the chair had been vacant, Henry Ware, a Unitarian, was called to the Hollis Chair of Divinity at Harvard College. This professorship, established in 1721, had been the major means of training men for the ministry of the churches.
138. Briefly, the Hopkinsians were the followers of Samuel Hopkins who termed himself a "Consistent Calvinist" and carried to triumphant conclusion the views put forward by Jonathan Edwards. He believed that the Calvinism which had not come under the influence of Edward's life-giving spirit was misleading and incapable of correcting the errors of Liberalism. It was the development of a strong, uncompromising, polemically eager Calvinism known as Hopkinsianism which contributed to the split in the Congregational church<sup>25</sup>. At first, it seemed that Hopkinsians were almost as much opposed to Old Calvinism as to Liberalism. The developments briefly sketched above, however, began to warn the Hopkinsians and Old Calvinists that they had a common enemy whose name was Unitarianism. X
139. The chair at present is held by Professor Nels F. S. Ferre.
140. Woods, Leonard, History of Andover Theological Seminary, p. 330.

## CHAPTER V

1. Marshall, Andrew, Ecclesiastical Establishments Considered (Sermon preached in Greyfriars Church, Glasgow, April 9, 1829), p. 7.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 10.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
5. Ibid., p. 13.

6. Ibid., p. 13.
7. Ibid., pp. 14-19.
8. Ibid., pp. 20 ff.
9. Ibid., p. 25.
10. Ibid., p. 26.
11. Ibid., pp. 27-29.
12. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
13. Ibid., p. 23.
14. Alexander's Memoirs of Ralph Wardlaw, p. 318.
15. Ibid., p. 318.
16. Ibid., p. 370.
17. Watt, Hugh, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 106.
18. Ibid., pp. 106-107.
19. Chalmers, Thomas, Lectures on the Establishment and Extension of National Churches, delivered in London from April 25 to May 12, 1838, Glasgow, p. 3.
20. Ibid., p. 8.
21. Ibid., p. 9.
22. Ibid., p. 10.
23. Ibid., p. 10.
24. Ibid., p. 11.
25. Ibid., p. 13.
26. Ibid., p. 17.
27. Ibid., p. 18.
28. Ibid., p. 29.
29. Ibid., p. 45.

30. Ibid., p. 66.
31. Ibid., p. 75.
32. Ibid., p. 77.
33. Ibid., p. 79.
34. Ibid., pp. 80-82.
35. Ibid., p. 88.
36. Ibid., p. 93.
37. Ibid., p. 98.
38. Ibid., p. 118.
39. Ibid., p. 122.
40. Ibid., p. 133.
41. Ibid., p. 136.
42. Ibid., p. 143.
43. Ibid., pp. 156-57.
44. Ibid., p. 166.
45. Ibid., pp. 166-67.
46. Ibid., p. 168.
47. Ibid., p. 175.
48. Ibid., p. 175.
49. Watt, Hugh, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 306.
50. Alexander's Memoirs of Ralph Wardlaw, p. 376.
51. Ibid., p. 381.
52. Ibid., p. 381.
53. The favorite example of Voluntaryists was the religious situation in the United States where no church was established and church and state were dissociated. Wardlaw, too, uses the American pattern as an illustration, but does not make much of it. Perhaps he knew that many of his fellow-Congregationalists in Massachusetts and Connecticut were not at all happy about their dis-establishment. ✓

54. Wardlaw, Ralph, National Church Establishments Examined, pp. 6-7.
55. Ibid., p. 43.
56. Ibid., p. 17.
57. Ibid., pp. 31-34.
58. Ibid., p. 47.
59. Ibid., p. 52.
60. Chalmers, Thomas, Lectures on the Establishment and Extension of National Churches, delivered in London from April 25 to May 12, 1838, Glasgow, p. 94.
61. Wardlaw, Ralph, National Church Establishments Examined, p. 45.
62. Ibid., p. 261.
63. Ibid., p. 264.
64. Ibid., p. 265.
65. Ibid., p. 271.
66. Ibid., pp. 270-272.
67. Ibid., p. 275.
68. Ibid., p. 276.
69. Ibid., p. 278.
70. Ibid., p. 287.
71. Ibid., p. 289.
72. Ibid., pp. 290-291.
73. Ibid., p. 309.
74. Ibid., pp. 309-310.
75. Ibid., p. 298.
76. Ibid., pp. 318-319.



77. Ibid., p. 319.
78. Ibid., p. 325.
79. Ibid., p. 329.
80. Ibid., p. 330.
81. Ibid., p. 332.
82. Ibid., p. 333.
83. Ibid., pp. 332-33.
84. Ibid., p. 334.
85. Ibid., pp. 337 and 34-41.
86. Ibid., p. 349.
87. Ibid., p. 350.
88. Ibid., p. 352.
89. Ibid., p. 360.
90. Ibid., p. 362.
91. Ibid., pp. 367 and 364.
92. Ibid., p. 368.
93. Ibid., p. 372.
94. Ibid., p. 373.
95. Ibid., p. 373.
96. Ibid., p. 59.
97. Ibid., p. 64.
98. Ibid., p. 73.
99. Ibid., p. 81.
100. Ibid., p. 80.
101. Ibid., p. 84.
102. Ibid., p. 85.

103. Ibid., p. 95.
104. Ibid., pp. 102-103.
105. Ibid., p. 104.
106. Ibid., p. 116.
107. Ibid., p. 118.
108. Ibid., p. 119.
109. Ibid., p. 146.
110. Wardlaw, Ralph, Civil Establishments of Christianity Tried by Their Only Authoritative Test, the Word of God, (Sermon, 1832), p. 7.
111. Ibid., pp. 9-11.
112. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
113. Wardlaw, Ralph, The Headship of Christ (Sermon, 1847), p. 4.
114. Ibid., p. 4.
115. Wardlaw, Ralph, National Church Establishments Examined, pp. 191-92.
116. Ibid., p. 187.
117. Ibid., p. 188.
118. Ibid., p. 191.
119. Ibid., p. 189.

#### CHAPTER VI

1. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, pp. 185-86.
2. Ibid., p. 200.
3. Ibid., pp. 202-203.
4. Ibid., p. 206.
5. Ibid., p. 231.

6. Ibid., p. 259. In our critical section, it will be noted that the justification of which Wardlaw speaks is separated from atonement in a way that considerably alters its historic significance.
7. Ibid., p. 213.
8. Ibid., p. 205.
9. Ibid., p. 204.
10. Ibid., p. 102.
11. Ibid., p. 8.
12. Ibid., p. 9.
13. Ibid., p. 9.
14. Ibid., p. 10.
15. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
16. Ibid., p. 13.
17. Ibid., p. 54.
18. Ibid., p. 55.
19. Ibid., p. 56.
20. Ibid., p. 57.
21. Ibid., p. 59.
22. Ibid., p. 62.
23. Ibid., p. 112.
24. Ibid., p. 110.
25. Ibid., p. 63.
26. Ibid., pp. 67-68.
27. Ibid., p. 74.
28. Ibid., p. 74.
29. Ibid., p. 64.

30. Ibid., p. 67.
31. Ibid., p. 286, Essay II.
32. Ibid., p. 77.
33. Ibid., p. 79.
34. The similarity of this view to the concept of hypothetical universalism, advanced by Amyraut in the 17th century, must be noted later. The Atonement controversy within the United Secession Church grew out of this apparently minute distinction between an atonement intrinsically all-sufficient but destined only for the elect, and an atonement made for all but limited in its efficacy by God's sovereign electing grace. Note will be made of this controversy at a later point.
35. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 80.
36. Wardlaw, Ralph, Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith. II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, p. 289, Essay II.
37. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. xxxi.
38. Ibid., p. xxxiii-iv.
39. Ibid., p. xx; This statement brings Wardlaw so close to his opponents of the "infinite sufficiency -- limited destination" school that we are unable at this point, to see the distinction which he claims to be always present.
40. Ibid., p. 113.
41. Wardlaw, Ralph, Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith. II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, p. 288, Essay II.
42. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 89.
43. Wardlaw, Ralph, Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith. II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, p. 293.
44. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 103.

45. Ibid., p. 106.
46. Ibid., p. 105.
47. Ibid., p. 111.
48. See the later exposition of the thought of Edward Polhill for a statement of this problem with which Wardlaw agreed and by which, through indirect contact, he was undoubtedly influenced.
49. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 291.
50. Ibid., p. 88.
51. Ibid., p. 88.
52. Wardlaw, Ralph, Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith. II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, p. 17, Essay I.
53. Ibid., p. 292, Essay I.
54. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 98.
55. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
56. Ibid., p. 27.
57. Ibid., p. 37.
58. Ibid., p. 37. Note how consistently Wardlaw adheres to these terms, expressive of the rectoral character of God. God is "Governor," not "Father."
59. Ibid., p. 42.
60. Ibid., p. 46.
61. We will observe, at a later point, the criticism made of Wardlaw and other "modified Calvinists" who sought without success to eliminate the idea of penal suffering as part of the work of Christ.
62. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 46.
63. Ibid., p. 127.



64. Ibid., p. 130.
65. Ibid., p. 198.
66. Wardlaw, Ralph, Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith. II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, p. 291, Essay II.
67. Ibid., p. 326, Essay II.
68. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 123.
69. Wardlaw, Ralph, Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith. II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, p. 326, Essay II.
70. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ, p. 284.
71. Ibid., p. 146.
72. Ibid., p. 150.
73. Ibid., p. 151.
74. Ibid., p. 156.
75. Ibid., p. 165.
76. Ibid., p. 183.
77. Ibid., p. 184.
78. Ibid., p. 185.
79. Ibid., p. 186.
80. Ibid., pp. 185-86.
81. Ibid., p. 191.
82. Wardlaw, Ralph, Two Essays: I. On Assurance of Faith. II. On the Extent of the Atonement and Universal Pardon, p. 35, Essay I.
83. Ibid., p. 59, Essay II.
84. Ibid., p. 60, Essay II.
85. Ibid., p. 80.

86. Ibid., p. 81.
87. Ibid., pp. 92-93, Essay I.
88. Ibid., p. 109.
89. Ibid., p. 110.
90. Ibid., p. 110.
91. Ibid., p. 113.
92. Ibid., p. 135, Essay I.
93. Ibid., pp. 17-18, Essay I.
94. Ritschl, Albrecht, A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, p. 1.
95. Luther, Martin, Works, Vol. II, p. 25.
96. Calvin, John, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk. III, xi, 2, p. 325.
97. Ibid., Book III, xi, 21, p. 335.
98. Ritschl, Albrecht, A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, p. 138.
99. Calvin, John, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk. III, xvi, 1, p. 353.

100.

## CHAPTER VII

1. Wardlaw, Ralph, Systematic Theology, Three volumes, Ed. by James R. Campbell, Vol. 2, p. 454.
2. Ibid., p. 453.
3. Ibid.
4. Franks, Robert S., A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ, Vol. 2, p. 393.
5. Calvin, John, op. cit., Inst., Book III, Chap. xxi, par. 7, p. 406.
6. Ibid., Book II, Chap. xvii, par. 2, p. 249.

7. Erskine, Thomas, The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel: In Three Essays, p. 20.
8. Ibid., p. 49.
9. Ibid., p. 63.
10. Ibid., p. 54.
11. Ibid., p. 54.
12. Ibid., p. 196. This is a very important point. What really is "Good News"? Surely, it is the news that Christ is ours because God has so loved us as to give him -- not the news that if we will believe, he can be ours. That belief must come but the Gospel is that which we hear and believe -- not our act of belief.
13. Ibid., p. 200.
14. Ibid., p. 201.
15. Ibid., pp. 238-39.
16. Erskine, Thomas, The Brazen Serpent: or, Life Coming Through Death, p. 33.
17. Ibid., p. 37.
18. Ibid., p. 39. A truly great insight, we believe. Here is the apprehension of a depth and a dimension of human life which we do not discover in Wardlaw. Here is a piety which is ever more Christian than the moralism of Wardlaw. inserted in text p. 209
19. Ibid., p. 49.
20. Ibid., p. 71.
21. Ibid., p. 72.
22. Ibid., (We emphasize these two statements as presenting with great effectiveness (in an otherwise difficult and obscure passage) the truth that atonement is God's act and in it, the securing of His justice is absolutely essential -- but it is an act of love and love means both sacrifice and union of the lovers. That which is done has reference, in and of itself, to those for whose sake it is done.)
23. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

24. Ibid., p. 158.
25. Ibid., p. 161.
26. Ibid., p. 255. → 12/11/22 Francis ref.
27. <sup>^</sup>Ibid., It must be said that Erskine did not have the same concern, as did Wardlaw, for the "display" of God's righteousness in the terrible judgment pronounced on sin in the suffering and death of Christ. He was a prophet of "religious consciousness" (often compared to Schleiermacher, who believed that an understanding of the mercy of God attained through knowledge of Christ will be apprehension of judgment as an inseparable element of mercy. The two can never be distinguished, as Wardlaw did distinguish them.
28. Campbell, J. McLeod, The Nature of the Atonement, xliv.
29. Ibid., C. - xvii.
30. Ibid., C. - xviii.
31. Ibid., C. - 51.
32. Ibid., p. 54.
33. Ibid., p. 55.
34. Ibid., p. 60.
35. Ibid., C. - 60.
36. This "moral value" theory is not developed in Wardlaw but is emphasized by the English Congregationalists.
37. Campbell, J. McLeod, The Nature of the Atonement, C. - 65-66.
38. Ibid., C. - 75.
39. We will note later how Edward Polhill, in 1673, met this objection. See p. 246.
40. Campbell, J. McLeod, The Nature of the Atonement, p. 79.
41. Ibid., p. 79.
42. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
43. Socinus, Faustus, Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant. . ., Vol. II, p. 186, B.

44. Grotius, Hugo, A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ, p. 258.
45. Socinus, Faustus, Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant. . ., p. 260.
46. Franks, Robert S., op. cit. <sup>Vol. 2</sup> p. 48
47. Grotius, Hugo, A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ, Chap. II, p. 53.
48. Ibid., End of Chap. IV.
49. Cf. Wardlaw and all the "modified Calvinists": they are Grotian in this.
50. Grotius, Hugo, A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ, p. 37.
51. ". . . penal example, then, is what Grotius means by satisfaction: how different the idea is from that of the Protestant orthodoxy may be seen in that Grotius says that, no strict satisfaction being implied, a further condition of salvation can be demanded of men, viz. faith. Thus indeed Grotius escaped the contradictions which Socinus has shown to lie in the Protestant idea of satisfaction, but he does so at the expense of the evangelical idea of faith, which by the Reformers is conceived as no extra condition or legal demand, or work, but as pure receptivity: here Grotius shows himself a true Arminian, and nearer to the Catholic than to the Protestant view." Franks, Vol. II, p. 67.
52. Finding no English translation of Amyraut's Exposition des Chap. VI et VIII de l'epistre de St. Paul aux Romains, I have translated the section dealing with verses 28-31 of Romans VIII, pp. 79-95 of the original volume. In these pages, Amyraut deals with the problem of predestination and justification which is our central concern. The translation will be found in the Appendix.
53. Amyraut, Möyse, Traité des religions contre ceux qui les estiment toutes indifferentes, p. 325.
54. Ibid., pp. 325-326.
55. Yet, of course, it is by God's sovereign grace that some believe and repent and others do not. In this, Wardlaw and Amyraut are at one. They are not Arminian. See later statement.



56. The governmental theory of the atonement in New England theology originated in the work of Jonathon Edwards, the younger, (1745-1801) in modifying and improving the work of his father. In this theory, the sacrificial sufferings of Christ are not to be understood as the payment of a debt due to God or as the infliction on Christ of the precise amount of suffering which would otherwise have been endured by those who were forgiven for his sake. They were rather to be seen as the support and vindication, through the sacrifice of a willing victim, of the moral government of the world, so that God may without inconsistency forgive freely such as repent and put their trust in Christ. Important consequences of this theory are the doctrine that Christ died for all men, not for the elect alone, and that neither the sin of Adam nor the righteousness of Christ can be imputed to men, moral qualities not being thus transferable. An excellent exposition of this theory is given by the younger Edwards in "Three Discourses on the Necessity of Atonement" published after his death in 1811. The theory of atonement there presented is similar in all major aspects to Wardlaw's.
57. Cameron was appointed professor at Saumur in 1618. He was named principal at Glasgow by James I, but the jealousy of his colleagues and suspicion concerning his position regarding the rights of monarchs forced him to leave in 1623. He died at Montauban in 1625. (Information on Cameron's life to be found in article in "Etudes de Theologie et D'Histoire par Les Professeurs de la Faculte de Theologie Protestante de Paris.")
58. Rarely does Wardlaw refer to any writer who is not a contemporary. There are a few references to Calvin but that is all. Copious Scriptural references are to be found in all his writings, but it is almost impossible to determine with certainty whether he read the works of earlier theologians.
59. This information is given in the Preface to the First Edition where Wardlaw refers to a statement in the Scottish Guardian for August 5, 1842, linking him with Dr. Brown and describing the two as "unsound on the cardinal doctrine of the atonement." (Discourses, p. vii.)
60. See Chapter V.
61. MacLeod, John, Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation, p. 245.



62. Robertson, Andrew, "A Brief Sketch of the History of the Atonement Controversy," pp. 4-5.
63. "The Expulsion of Nine Students from the Glasgow Theological Academy. . . by the Expelled Students," p. 4.
64. Robertson, Andrew, "A Brief Sketch of the History of the Atonement Controversy," p. 14.
65. Balmer, Robert and Brown, John, "Statements on Certain Doctrinal Points made October 5, 1843, before the United Associate Synod, at their request," pp. 68-69.
66. Ibid., p. 70.
67. Ibid., p. 5.
68. Ibid., p. 9.
69. Ibid. "The bookseller," says Balmer, "printed the pamphlet entirely at his own risk; and whatever be the result of the present discussions to the writer of the preface, they will, I doubt not, render the speculation a profitable one to the publisher," p. 13.
70. Ibid., p. 19.
71. Ibid., p. 19.
72. Ibid., pp. 73-74.
73. Ibid., p. 38.
74. Ibid., p. 47.
75. Polhill, Edward, The Divine Will Considered in the Eternal Decrees and Holy Execution of them, p. 47.
76. Ibid., p. 53.
77. Ibid., p. 54.
78. Ibid., pp. 55-56.
79. Ibid., pp. 75-76.
80. Ibid., p. 78.
81. Ibid., p. 82.

82. Ibid., p. 86.
83. Ibid., p. 90.
84. Ibid., p. 91.
85. Ibid., p. 92.
86. Ibid., p. 92.
87. Ibid., p. 93.
88. Ibid., p. 97.
89. Ibid., pp. 99-100.
90. Ibid., pp. 215-216.
91. Ibid., p. 100.
92. By this term, Polhill means the Gospel assurance that all who believe in Christ shall be saved.
93. Polhill, Edward, The Divine Will Considered in the Eternal Decrees and Holy Execution of them, pp. 111-112.
94. Ibid., p. 125.
95. Ibid., p. 128.
96. Wardlaw says: "You perish by an act of self-destruction. It is by no influence of any secret decree of heaven that you are lost; -- it is the result of your own free and unconstrained choice," (Discourses on Atonement, p. 196).
97. Polhill, Edward, The Divine Will Considered in the Eternal Decrees and Holy Execution of them, p. 281.
98. Ibid., p. 321.
99. Ibid., p. 322.
100. wardlaw appears to be closer to Morison than to Polhill and Balmer. For him, Christ's death did not have two meanings but one meaning which was applied in two ways.
101. Polhill, Edward, The Divine Will Considered in the Eternal Decrees and Holy Execution of them, p. 339.
102. Ibid., p. 324.

103. Ibid., pp. 314-15. By "salvation on Gospel-terms" Polhill means simply the promise of the Gospel that all who believe shall be saved. It was always difficult to reconcile this invitation and promise with the idea of eternal decree.
104. Ibid., pp. 310-11. It is to this statement that reference is made on p. 217. This is a rather typical sentence in Polhill (and many others whose prose we have had to struggle with in this study).
105. Balmer, Robert, "Remarks on the Doctrine of Divine Decrees" in Brown, John, Theological Tracts, Selected and Original, p. 207.
106. Ibid., pp. 212-13.
107. Ibid., p. 214.
108. Balmer, Robert and Brown, John, op. cit., p. 26.
109. Ritschl has forcefully stated the conviction expressed here and in other places, in these words: "It does not seem to me accurate theology to limit to God -- to the satisfaction He receives or to the propitiation of His wrath -- the direct saving efficacy of the action and passion of Christ: and to deduce the forgiveness of men's sins, or their reconciliation with God, merely as consequences from that result, and so to make the saving efficacy of Christ's work as regards man dependent only indirectly or secondarily upon His doing and suffering. This mode of putting the doctrine has indeed in its favor the weight of almost all the traditions of dogmatic theology; but it has against it the whole idiom and way of thinking of the New Testament. Moreover, it does not in the least degree suit the purpose which ought with peculiar distinctness to lead every theologian in his doctrine of Christ -- this, namely, of setting forth Christ as the direct Revealer of God's saving purpose towards men, not merely in His words, but also in all His works. We come short of this task, if we refer the value of Christ's passion directly only to a pacification or change effected in His mind, and set forth in an altogether separate part of the system the saving graces of God which thereby were first made possible. -- Ritschl, p.
110. Calvin, John, op. cit., Inst. III, 11, 21.
111. Ibid., III, 11, 23.

112. Ibid., III, 13, 5.
113. By Franks in Vol. I of Doctrine of the Work of Christ. p. 441
114. Calvin, John, op. cit., I, 15, 6.
115. Ibid., Chapter XVI, 1-4.
116. Ibid., III, 1, 3.
117. Ibid., III, 2, 7.
118. Ibid., III, 21, 1.
119. Ibid., III, 23, 10.
120. Ibid., III, 21, 5.
121. Ibid., III, 21, 7.
122. Ibid., III, 24, 17.
123. Ibid., III, 17, 2.
124. Election takes precedence over atonement whether, as in Marshall, the atonement is destined for the elect only or, as in Wardlaw, its efficient application to the elect is "part of the pre-ordained conditions on which (the mediator) engaged to execute the work given him to do." See p. 14.
125. Campbell, J. McLeod, op. cit., pp. 28-29.
126. Ibid., p. 36.
127. Ibid., p. 35.
128. Ibid., p. 36.
129. Ibid., p. 41.
130. Ibid., p. 42.
131. Ibid., p. 42.
132. Boehmer, Heinrich, Luther in Light of Recent Research, p. 82.
133. Ibid., pp. 79-80.
134. Ibid., p. 79.

135. Luther, Martin, Works, Gospel Sermon, Good Friday -- Lenker Ed. Vol. XI, #1-16.
136. Ibid., The Fourteen on Consolation: Vol. I, p. 168.
137. Ibid., Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, pp. 20-22.
138. Ibid., Gospel Sermon, Pentecost Sunday, Lenker Ed. Vol. XII, #16-17.
139. Ibid., Treatise on Christian Liberty, Vol. II, p. 320.
140. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 169.
141. Ibid., Bondage of the Will.
142. Ibid., The Table-Talk, #LXVI.
143. Ibid., Conversations, p. 135.
144. Ibid., Epistle Sermon, Trinity Sunday -- Lenker Ed., Vol. IX, #19.
145. Ibid., Gospel Sermon, First Sunday in Advent -- Lenker Ed., Vol. X, #37.

#### CHAPTER VIII

1. Both involved money and there seems to have been at least slight ground for the suspicion that Wardlaw was not without concern for financial security. It might be remembered that he had nine children.
2. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., p. 233.
3. Ibid., p. 299.
4. Wardlaw, Ralph, Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p. 102.
5. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 163.
6. Wardlaw, Ralph, Christian Ethics, p. 118.
7. Ibid., p. 126.
8. Ibid., p. 153.
9. Edinburgh Review, Vol. lxi, p. 59.

10. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., p. 252.
11. See "The Sentiments and Conduct of dissenters towards their non-intrusion brethren in the Established Church," Edinburgh, 1843.
12. Alexander, W. L., op. cit., p. 425.
13. There is no need for going beyond the New Testament. Subsequently to the latest date of the inspired Canon of the New Testament, there is little or nothing sure." Congregational Independency, pp. 18-19.
14. Wardlaw, Ralph, Friendly letters to the Society of Friends on Some of Their Distinguishing Principles, pp. 49-50.
15. Ibid., p. 101.
16. They who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit, feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason; but it obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit. For though it conciliates our reverence by its internal majesty, it never seriously affects us till it is confirmed by the Spirit in our hearts. . . That alone is true faith which the Spirit of God seals in our hearts. . . (Institutes, I, 7, 5.)
17. Dale, R. W., History of English Congregationalism, pp. 704-705.
18. Wardlaw, Ralph, Discourses on the Principal Points of the Socinian Controversy, p. 157.
19. Calvin, John, op. cit., Inst. I, 7, par. 4-5; 8, par. 1, pp. 73-74.
20. Ibid., Inst. I, 9, 3.



intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."<sup>100</sup> This passage had been used in support of the argument that there was a basis in the New Testament for the authority of the magistrate in matters of religion.

The second proposition is the most positive of the three and certainly the most important. It is very interesting to observe that here Wardlaw does not attempt to make the New Testament yield proof for the authoritative character of the church government of Independent Churches.

"It were altogether foreign to my present purpose to enter into any discussion of the Constitution of the Church, in regard to government and discipline, as established in the New Testament; whether it should be episcopalian, presbyterian, congregational, or a compound of any two, or of all of them."<sup>101</sup>

It is enough for his purpose that the New Testament describes

"a community entirely per se, quite unique in its character, and completely independent in the means of its support and enlargement; independent, I mean, of all human aid from without itself; a voluntary society, of which no one was a member otherwise than by full choice -- by God's choice of him, and his choice of God. . . ."<sup>102</sup>

At another point he states:

"The voluntary support of the gospel by the Church herself, is as much an ordinance of Christ as the Lord's Supper is. The one is his ordinance for maintaining and extending his Church, the other is his ordinance for perpetuating the remembrance of himself."<sup>103</sup>

The third proposition ("that all imitation of the ancient Jewish constitution, in this particular, is from its very nature impossible; and were it possible would not be warrantable") is proved, first, by demolishing the argument that there was a National Establishment of Religion in Israel which gives the full weight of divine authority to the principle of establishment. There was no National Establishment in Israel; there was a Theocracy.

"I grant that Jehovah instituted a national church; but then he instituted such a church, with himself as the supreme Head of ecclesiastical and civil government in the nation, conducting his administration in both departments by a system of supernatural interposition and immediate manifestation of his presence and authority, such as we mean by a theocracy; -- the nation itself by this means sustaining the two-fold character of the Church and the State; the church, in its relation to Jehovah as its God, -- the state, in relation to Jehovah as its King."<sup>104</sup>

Only God can institute a theocracy.

". . . to call our modern Establishments imitations of the Jewish, is to impose upon ourselves by a mere correspondence of names, while the very essence of the thing imitated -- that which constituted it what it was -- is wanting in the pretended imitation."<sup>105</sup>

Wardlaw further states that

"we have. . . an explicit disavowal from the Redeemer's own lips, of the Old Testament constitution of his kingdom as in any respect a model for the kingdom he was about to establish."

This he finds in the declaration of Jesus to Pilate:

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world; then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

His exegesis of this passage hinges on the meaning of which he takes to be an adverb of time -- "Our Lord. . . affirming that it was not now, in regard to his kingdom as it had been of old, or as it had been hitherto."106

"He had all along . . . been King of the Jews. But in former times, his Kingdom, in its form and constitution had been national; there was in it an incorporation of the civil and the sacred, and it was administered by similar outward means as other kingdoms. But now it was to be otherwise."107

"Henceforward, the subjects of his Kingdom were to be those, of whatever nation under heaven, who believed the truth, and lived under its practical influence; and it was to maintain its ground, punish its delinquents, and extend its conquests, by no power but the moral power of the same truth, -- by no sword but 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'"108

There is needed no "express statute of repeal" of the ancient Jewish constitution, for the divine withdrawal from it and the enactment of a new system are quite sufficient.

Wardlaw concludes that when "we have ascertained what was the principle on which the church was originally founded, we have no choice left us -- we have nothing to do but to obey."109

He is here echoing the statement which appears in his Sermon of 1832: "Whatever this book dictates as truth, it is ours without gainsaying to believe, whatever it enjoins as duty implicitly to obey."110 In this Sermon, the connection between

strict adherence to Scripture and the acceptance of the Apostolic Church as normative is made more clear than in the Lectures. ✓

"It is not an uncommon sentiment. . . that the original constitution of the primitive Church was not designed to be permanent, but was adapted to the circumstances of its early condition, and left to be accommodated, in subsequent times, to such changes as might arise in its situation and prospects. . . If, indeed, the Church is made to embrace entire civil communities, composed of the most heterogeneous characters, under the common designation of Christians, -- then the necessity of change and accommodation cannot but be apparent and felt. But if the Church is regarded as composed of spiritual men, -- men who, though in the world, are not of the world, -- the same constitution of government which was adapted to its spiritual character in the days of the apostles will be no less suitable for it now."111 ✓

Nowhere in Wardlaw does the characteristic emphasis of the "sect" reveal itself more forcefully than in his attitude toward the Scriptural authority for the voluntary church. It might be said that the constant appeal to Scripture in all matters of controversy is a salient feature of the writings of all men of his day. But it is only Wardlaw and the other Independents who carry their principle to its logical conclusion in reference to the Church. Wardlaw indeed protests against those who ✓

"on other occasions have pleaded, and pleaded ably, for an appeal on all religious topics to the one standard of faith and conduct, -- 'to the law and to the testimony' -- (and) have, on this, confined themselves to principles of expediency, and calculations of political economy, with hardly an allusion to the Bible, any more than if no such document were in existence."112

Four years after the Disruption, he is hopeful that "the step out of the Church" having been taken, "the step into dissent" must soon follow.<sup>113</sup> His grounds for this hope are, as always, his belief in the invincibility of "scriptural conception of the spiritual character of the kingdom of Christ."<sup>114</sup>

Troeltsch/has pointed out that the sect finds its <sup>ref. ^</sup> authority in what it regards as a truer understanding of the Scriptures and of primitive Christianity, and that it maintains a critical attitude toward the parent institution and seeks, in its detachment from it, a more positive realization of the Christian life. By this definition, Wardlaw qualifies as a champion of the sect and like all sectarians, he hoped and believed that, eventually, all Christians would be won by the obvious truth of the view which was his own.

#### The Duty and Right of the Civil Magistrate

In the New Testament, Wardlaw finds not only his supreme authority for the voluntary church but powerful support for his conception of the rights and duties of the civil magistrate. An entire Lecture is devoted to the discussion of "The legitimate province of the civil magistrate in regard to religion." The question is: "What is the magistrate's province in regard to religion?" The answer, radical even for a voluntaryist, is



" . . . his true and legitimate province is -- to have no province at all. As a man, he is bound to believe the truths and obey the precepts of the word of God: -- as a magistrate, he is bound to fulfill all his official functions on christian principles, from christian motives, and according to christian precepts, -- as every man is, in every condition and every relation of life: -- but authority in religion he has none. Religion has authority over him, -- the same as it has over all; but in it, or over it, or over his subjects in aught that pertains to it, his authority is null."115

Christians are subjects of God and Christ and subjects of Caesar. They are to render religious debts and duties to the one and civil debts and duties to the other.116

" . . . the right of rulers to enact must be coincident in extent with the obligation of subjects to obey. Religion is a matter in which no man can be under obligation to obey a fellow-man; and for this reason, it is a matter in which no man can have a right to enact for a fellow-man."117

We do not live today under a theocracy and therefore, "what was competent to the very best kings of Israel or Judah to do, it is not now competent to the best kings of any other nation to do."118 The sword is the only instrument of the power of coercion, a power which is part of the authority of civil rulers -- and religion cannot admit the power of the sword.

"The civil magistrate can have no power in religion: because the power which belongs to him is, in its very nature, coercive, -- and in religion such power is inconsistent with its very nature and incapable of being exercised."119



Such are the clear and simple terms in which Wardlaw denies any religious authority to the civil magistrate. It is quite clear that he means, by this denial, an equal and consistent refusal to admit any relationship to be established between church and state. It is not only that the magistrate has no power in religious matters but that the church can assume no authority in regard to civil matters. Wardlaw did not believe at all that ministers and Christian people should be silent on political issues. He campaigned against slavery; he carried his fight for the voluntary principle to the Prime Minister and Parliament. But the Christian Church, as an official body, can no more assume jurisdiction in regard to state affairs than the state can assume any right to decide in affairs that pertain to the church. There is to be complete separation between the two. He argues in fact for the situation that exists in the United States of America.

#### A Free But National Church: The Great Issue

Thomas Chalmers consistently understated the Voluntary principle; Ralph Wardlaw consistently overstated the implications of Establishment. I think the former would have to admit that the Voluntary principle, at its best, is that principle of "diffusive benevolence" which Wardlaw claimed it to be. And Wardlaw does, in fact, admit that Chalmers and his adherents do not maintain in practise the

high view of Establishment which he claims to be the true conception against which Voluntaryism is projected as an alternative. But while Chalmers did not credit the voluntary principle with all the power, extent and effectiveness which it does possess, Wardlaw did correctly assess the dangers of an establishment carried to its logical conclusions. Here lies an important difference in their arguments. Is there not more of illusion in Chalmers' picture of establishment than there is in Wardlaw's depiction of the voluntary church system? Does Chalmers succeed in making his case for state support without state interference? I cannot see that he does. His basic convictions are on the side of the freedom of the church from all external control. That he will fight for. But he believes, with equal intensity, in the extension of the church's influence over the whole population. For the realization of that great goal, he is willing and able to convince himself that the church can be at once dependent and free: dependent on state support because in no other way can it achieve its great goal, but free because no achievement is worth the sacrifice of that freedom. When the storm broke, when the Disruption took place, Chalmers chose freedom even at the possible cost of effectiveness of the church in the fulfillment of its mission. Then he proved, gloriously, that a Free Church, forced to rely upon the voluntary principle for its support, can undertake the Christianization of a nation and, with a not inconsiderable

success, fulfill its chosen mission. This kind of inconsistency is the most thrilling proof of the power of the Christian gospel which will not and cannot be contained by the systems that at one time or another become its agencies in the world.

Wardlaw conducted a skillfull campaign against his opponent's position. Yet he failed to convey, at least to this reader, a sense of urgency comparable to that of Chalmers. One can admit that the proofs of Scripture and the experience of the early Church, the evidence of history and the corruptions that have come from establishment all point to the moral superiority and the unquestioned authority of the voluntary system. But does it work; is it sufficient? Are the separate denominations of Dissenters sufficiently concerned and responsible for the Christian good of the nation so that they will submerge whatever differences may divide them and concentrate their united efforts on that task for which the whole Christian Church exists? Even though it be admitted that the existence of an Established Church limits their sphere of influence and makes it impossible to demonstrate the full effectiveness of their principle, can these churches point to a unity of purpose which holds promise of full flowering were their forces to be set free and their request for equal status to be granted? It is not in any specific passage or Lecture of Wardlaw's that one senses a failure to answer this question satisfactorily, but the whole impression of the

Lectures is that the evils of establishment have been quite fully revealed while the weaknesses of voluntaryism have not been convincingly disproved.

Apart from the involved and difficult question of the relationship of church and state (which is admittedly the major issue in the Chalmers-Wardlaw debate), these lectures provide a most interesting commentary on our tendency to make very optimistic estimates of human nature when we consider our own systems and pessimistic estimates when we look at the systems proposed by others. Chalmers was quite certain that the establishment principle could remain uncorrupted by the improper use of power by those into whose hands it was given in this system; he was equally certain that the Christian community did not possess the energy or the vision to further with vigor and effectiveness the mission which has been entrusted to it by its Lord. Wardlaw knew that power corrupts and he demonstrates a judicious insight into the nature of the danger which confronts Christianity when it depends upon external authority for the maintenance of its life. But Wardlaw places far too much confidence in the unorganized benevolence of Christians.

The resolution of this conflict of judgments based upon preference, must come in a recognition of the importance of some system of checks and balances, by which the threat of tyranny in state control of the church and of anarchy in unrestricted voluntaryism is avoided. Neither of these men,